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The Oxford Treasury of English Literature

Vol. II: Growth of the Drama

By

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T

PREFACE

THE present volume is intended as a companion to the study of Shakespeare, and is therefore classified, on the conventional plan, into the three divisions of Tragedies, Comedies, and Histories, with each of which it is suggested that one or two of Shakespeare's plays should be read. The selection of these may be determined partly on chronological grounds, partly on those of comparison or contrast:—e. g. *Richard II* with *Edward II*; *Henry IV* and *Henry V* with *Sir John Oldcastle*; *Philaster* with *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, or *The Winter's Tale*.

The principle adopted in the first volume, that the illustrations should be few and long rather than brief and numerous, is even more imperative here. To offer a single scene as an example of dramatic genius is to offer a single stone as an example of architecture: we have, therefore, restricted ourselves to eighteen plays in all, and have endeavoured to give enough of each to show its general plan and purport. Our choice, like any other within the same limits, must of necessity be open to criticism: there is no attempt at an exhaustive history of the English drama, but only an indication, by typical instances, of the main stages in its growth. Some plays which belong to a more advanced course of study have been here omitted as unsuitable to our present purpose: e. g. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*, and the two grim

masterpieces of Cyril Tourneur: and for the same reason we have preferred *Tamburlaine* to *Faustus*, Dekker to Middleton, and *Perkin Warbeck* to *The Broken Heart*. In other cases—e.g. the choice of the two Miracle plays, or the preference of *Sejanus* to *Catiline* and of *Vittoria Corombona* to the *Duchess of Malfi*—we have been chiefly guided by standards of literary and artistic value: sometimes, as in *Gorboduc* and *King John*, the decision was based on grounds of historical importance. The Mumming play was supplied to us by the actors themselves, from traditional parts orally transmitted.

To each play is prefixed a short critical note intended to show its *entourage* and to supply a standpoint for its consideration. For the opinions expressed we must, of course, take full responsibility: for the materials on which those opinions are formed we have been much indebted to the great critics, from Dryden to Johnson, and from Lamb and Hazlitt to J. A. Symonds and Mr. Swinburne; to the researches of scholars like Dr. Dyce, Dr. Furnivall, and Mr. Sidney Lee; and to three books which are indispensable to the historical study of the subject:—Payne Collier's *History of the English Drama*, Dr. Ward's *English Dramatic Literature*, and *The Mediaeval Stage* by Mr. E. K. Chambers.

G. E. H.

W. H. H.

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SHAKESPEARE'S PREDECESSORS.		SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES.		SHAKESPEARE'S SUCCESSORS.	
Bale	1495-1563	Munday	1553-1633	Webster	? 1580-? 1625
Udall	1505-1556	Lodge	1558-1625	Massinger	1588-1640
Norton	1532-1584	Chapman	1559-1634	Ford	1586-? 1640
Sackville	1536-1608	Daniel	1562-1629	Shirley	1596-1666
Lyly	1554-1606	Drayton	1568-1631		
Kyd	? 1557-? 1595	Middleton	? 1570-1627		
Peele	1558-1597	Dekker	1570-1640		
Greene	1560-1592	Jonson	1573-1631		
Marlowe	1568-1592	T. Heywood	? 1575-? 1650		
Nashe	1567-1601	Marston	1576-1634		
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		Beaumont	1584-1616		
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES. II

SHAKESPEARE, 1564-1616.

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THIS VOLUME.**

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Richard III
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Dream** } 1595

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**Jonson: Every Man in His
Humour, 1598**

{ **Dekker: Shoemaker's Holiday,
1600; Munday: Sir John Old-
castle, 1600**

Jonson: Sejanus, 1603

**Webster: Vittoria Corombona,
? 1607**

**Beaumont and Fletcher: Phil-
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INTRODUCTION

THE Roman drama, which began to degenerate in the later times of the Republic, fell during the Empire on evil days. The actors were a degraded class, stamped with the branding-iron of successive legislators; they had no vote, they had no civic position, they could not defend themselves in the courts, they could not intermarry with the families of free citizens. Little by little they sank to the lowest grade of popular entertainment; the centres of riot and disturbance, sometimes inhibited from performing, sometimes banished by Imperial decree, never allowed for a moment to assume the rank and dignity of the artist. It is true that Nero and some of his baser nobles outraged public opinion by appearing on the stage: the exception is not less significant than are the bitter comments which it provoked.¹ It is true that individual actors occasionally won favour at a dissipated court, and were even rewarded with a disdainful grant of office: that counted for nothing in a city which had seen Caligula bestow the consulate on his horse. Dramatic literature, ousted from the boards by dance and pantomime, took refuge in the prim laboured tragedies of Seneca, which were never even intended for representation. Comedy itself was too serious: the wit of Plautus had grown stale, the delicate humanity of Terence had become insipid, and Rome reserved its laughter for juggler's tricks and the postures of the mountebank. There could be no more salient contrast to the Attic Theatre, rich in competing masterpieces and public renown; where the players were freemen, where they followed an honourable profession, and where, if tradition be correct, Aeschylus and Sophocles had been of their company.

It is not, therefore, surprising that Christian

¹ 'Res haud mira tamen, citharoedo principe, mimus Nobilis,' says Juvenal (viii. 198). See the whole passage.

Rome should have treated the actor with severity. His calling was denounced by the Fathers from Tertullian to Augustine; it was expressly condemned by more than one Church Council; the clergy were forbidden to visit the theatre at all, the laity were allowed there only on certain days, and that as an extreme concession to human weakness. Christian emperors tolerated the stage as an evil with which it was no longer possible to cope; Christian writers employed every device of eloquence and persuasion to warn the faithful against this haunt of iniquity: 'The devil,' says Tertullian, 'who entered into a woman at the theatre was proof against exorcism because he had found her in his own domain.' Then the cause of virtue was strengthened by unexpected allies. The Ostrogoths who conquered Italy in the fifth and sixth centuries treated the pleasures of the Roman populace with a contempt which they took no pains to conceal; the Lombards who followed them adopted a still more drastic policy; by the time of Gregory the Great there was no longer a theatre in Rome; before the middle of the seventh century Isidore of Seville¹ could find a theme for antiquarian learning in the forgotten annals of the playhouse.

This entire downfall of the debased Roman *spectacula* was a needful preliminary to any work of reconstruction. It was only when this tangle of weeds had been removed that there was any hope of a sounder and more wholesome growth; and indeed the land lay fallow for some hundreds of years before the new seed was ready for the sowing. The natural mimetic instinct inherent in man was, if not crushed, at any rate suppressed by the suspicions of ecclesiastical authority, and from the seventh century to the tenth the history of European

¹ Bishop, 600-686. See, on this subject, Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. I, ch. i.

drama is virtually a blank. But in the tenth century there sprang up a tiny growth which, though it left no direct issue, is in itself sufficiently remarkable to arrest attention. The Germans had demolished the Roman Theatre; for years before its demolition the Church had discouraged even men from entering it, and yet in the revenges of time it came about that the earliest playwright of the new order was a nun in a German convent. Hrotswith of Gandersheim, born about 920, was a lady of noble birth and of much learning, who spent the greater part of her life under the Benedictine rule. Several of her poems are known¹—an unfinished epic on the exploits of Otho I, a history of her cloister, the lives of various saints, all written in smooth undistinguished verses, for the defects of which she modestly apologizes on the score of 'feminea fragilitas'. But her principal work was a set of six prose dramas, intended, as she says, to supersede Terence as a school classbook. They can hardly have been written with an eye to actual performance, although in *Callimachus* a stage direction bids one of the actors address himself 'ad spectatores'; they are mostly stories of martyrdom or of the conversion of sinners, and are as full of innocent horrors as a child's fairy tale. Yet they are in many ways interesting to the student of dramatic literature. *Dulcitus* contains one episode of pure comedy:—the amorous tyrant who, in the darkness, mistakes the kettle for his unwilling captive: there is genuine pathos in the story of the hermit Abraham, whose little niece is tempted back to the world, and who leaves his hermitage to go out and rescue her; in

¹ Her works were discovered by Conrad Celtes, and printed in 1501. The best modern edition is that of P. von Winterfeld, Berlin, 1902. There is also an edition of the plays with a French translation by Magnin, published in 1845. The names, assigned by the editors, are *Galicanus* (Parts I and II), *Dulcitus*, *Callimachus*, *Abraham*, *Paphnutius*, and *Sapientia*.

more than one play there are touches of humour, and even strokes of characterization. Again, there are some curious anticipations of the morality plays which came later, and of which the *dramatis personae* were embodiments of abstract virtues and vices. Thus in *Sapientia* the three maidens who suffer martyrdom on the stage are called Fides, Spes, and Caritas, and Sapientia is their mother: the remaining characters being the Emperor Hadrian, who commands the tortures, and his urban prefect Antiochus who inflicts them. But a complete examination of these works would carry us too far from our present purpose. Enough has been said to indicate their historical importance, not as isolated phenomena—there are no isolated phenomena in history—but as the most vivid expression of a tendency which was once more beginning to assume shape and embodiment.

Meanwhile a more fruitful seed was being planted within the sanctuary of the Church itself. The beginnings of the liturgical drama cannot be dated, for the simple reason that it is impossible to fix the point at which they emerged from the ritual of divine service. The mysteries of the faith were expressed by symbolic acts and described by hymns and antiphons; in course of time the symbolism grew more elaborate, more picturesque, more dramatic; by the tenth century we have the Gospel story represented in dialogue,¹ by the early years of the twelfth the practice has been extended from Holy Writ to the lives and legends of the saints.² For some time these plays were kept strictly in ecclesiastical hands.³ The min-

¹ See Chambers, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, ch. xviii. See also Manly's examples from the Winchester troper, *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama*, I, xix.

² The *Ludus de Sancta Katerina* was produced at Dunstable before 1119.

³ Up to the Tudor period they were written, supervised, and often acted by the clergy. See Payne Collier, Vol. II, p. 141.

strels held aloof, the *histriones* of country fair and village merrymaking were, by special ordinance, prohibited from taking part in them: their essence was still the presentation of religious truth, and their dramatic form was but the readiest and most direct means of impressing the congregation. But two influences, each in its way potent, began to disintegrate this close and concentrated scheme. In the first place, the Church recognized that a strained bow is in danger of breaking, and attempted to secure the loyalty of its adherents by making occasional concessions to their appetite for sheer amusement. The Feast of Fools, the Boy Bishop, the Messe de l'Âne, were permitted with the same politic acquiescence which allowed gargoyles on the cathedral walls and popular melodies in the cathedral service. It was but a step further to introduce scenes of comic relief into the very mysteries themselves: to represent the devil as grotesque, to portray Noah's wife as a scolding shrew, to make the shepherds abiding in the field victims of a humorous and roguish comrade. Secondly, came the great commercial guilds with their wealth, their corporate life, and their sense of pageantry, tolerated and even supported by the Church, yet playing an important part in the secularization of the drama. As early as 1290 the burghers of Cahors performed a 'ludus' in honour of St. Martial; in the fourteenth century follow the guild-plays of Chester, Beverley, and York; in the fifteenth the Towneley Plays of Wakefield, the *Ludus Coventriae* given by a company of strolling actors, and many others. The lead set by the guild was followed by parish after parish until there was hardly a village green in England where you might not have witnessed, on a Corpus Christi day, some rude representation of the Flood, or the story of Balaam, or the legend of Longinus or Veronica.

These religious dramas appear to have been called

indifferently Mysteries or Miracle plays. An attempt has been made to discriminate the terms, by confining the name Mystery to Holy Writ, and Miracle play to the legends of the saints, but if such a distinction was ever made it was often traversed by the careless usage of the time.¹ In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the time of Gower and Lydgate and Occleve, there came into vogue another dramatic form called the Morality: a didactic play of which the dramatis personae were not historical characters, but embodiments of particular virtues and vices. We have already seen a primitive anticipation of this type in the *Sapientia* of Hrotswith; we can trace its influence in the twelfth-century Latin play of *Antichristus*, and in various works of edification written by Guillaume Herman, and by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. The name Morality is first attached to a *jeu sur le fait de la danse macabre* played before Philip the Good at Bruges in 1449; in England their earliest name was 'Paternoster plays',² and it was only by an adoption of French usage that they took the title by which they are now currently known. With their appearance there came into dramatic literature a problem which is equally interesting in its statement and in its solution. Mysteries and Miracle plays had mainly relied on episode, on event, on pageantry, on those devices, in short, which could most directly appeal to an unlettered public. Moralities, by the very conditions of their existence, had to lay their special stress on the ethical side, on the presentation of abstract qualities, on the mechanism of speech and dialogue. And because the world was not yet ready to appreciate this subtler appeal they were obliged, in their earlier years, to borrow a coarser and more sensational

¹ See Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. I, pp. 41, 42.

² They are so designated by Wiclif about 1378.

method from their rivals. Thus *Anima in Mind, Will, and Understanding* has 'little devils running in and out beneath her skirts', and in the *Castle of Perseverance* Belial is represented with 'gunpowder burning in pipes through his hands and ears'.¹ The requirements of comedy were usually met by a character distinctively called 'The Vice', who threw such plot as there was into imbroglio, who chastised the devil with a wooden sword, and who entertained the spectators with impromptu jests and farcical buffoonery.² Yet in spite of this concession the Moralities mark a distinct advance in dramatic method. The presentation of personified virtues and vices may not in itself be of much account: at least it shifted the centre of gravity from the action of the play to the characters by whom that action was conducted, and so prepared the path for that delineation of humanity which has made the Elizabethan stage one of the chief glories of our literature.

Last in order, yet overlapping with the others, comes the purely secular drama, which takes its subject from profane history or romance. In 1395 appeared a French play on *Grisélidis*, in 1439 another on *Joan of Arc*, about 1450 a *mystère* on the favourite mediaeval subject of the destruction of Troy. Some three years later England entered the field with *King Robert of Sicily*, recorded in the *Lincoln Annales* under 1453, but, for reasons which may easily be divined, the secular drama was of slow growth in our country, and the next conspicuous instance is Bale's *King John* in 1539,³ which is really a compromise between the historical drama and the Morality. It is a remarkable testimony to the power of ecclesiastical influence that the numberless political changes of Western Europe should,

¹ Chambers, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 156.

² See the Clown's song in *Twelfth Night*, Act iv. sc. 2.

³ Chambers, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 446.

up to the sixteenth century, have afforded so little material to the dramatist.

It is probable that the first liturgical plays were in Latin, like the service from which they were derived. But the need that they should be understood of the people wrought some modification of this practice: by the tenth century the Latin is interspersed with sentences of French; by the eleventh century the latter language is becoming predominant. In England our Norman and Angevin kings endeavoured to enforce their native speech upon the conquered race: our earliest Mysteries (e. g. those of Hilarius) were written in a mixture of Latin and French; in those of the next century French again prevails; and it is recorded that Ranulph Higden, the Chester monk, who died in 1358, had to make three pilgrimages to Rome before he could obtain Papal permission that the Chester plays should be given in English.¹ With that permission, however, the turning-point was passed. There can be no doubt that the Guild plays were presented in the vernacular of their district; and it is a significant piece of evidence that the chief surviving monument of the Cornish language consists of three Miracle plays (*Creation*, *Passion*, and *Resurrection*), which date from the closing years of the fourteenth century. This confusion or alternation of tongues resulted in some curious anomalies. The titles and stage directions remained in Latin: the English translators were sometimes careless or indifferent; Herod in one of the Towneley plays is made to apologize because he 'can no French'; Augustus, in the sixth Chester play, breaks into that language for a few incongruous phrases; most remarkable of all, the fourteenth Chester play forgets to which people it belongs, and offers up a fervent petition for 'the King of France in his realm and

¹ Marriott, *English Miracle Plays and Mysteries*, p. xl.

barony'. It may be worth remembering that the period under consideration was that which saw the climax of French influence on English literature, and the nationalist reaction which culminated in the work of Langland and Wiclif.

Besides these regular and dignified forms of dramatic art, sanctioned by the Church, though gradually emancipating themselves from her control, there are three types of less respectable origin which remain to be discussed. The Mumming plays were the poor relations of secular drama, acted in the village ale-house or the baronial kitchen by ancestors of Flute and Snug and Bottom: rude and unlettered intermixtures of St. George and the Turkish Knight, of Father Christmas and Beelzebub, of the comic doctor and the giant Turpin; the parts handed down by tradition, the plot sufficient if it afforded opportunity for a dance or a bout at quarter-staves. Yet for all their rudeness they are as persistent as folk-songs: they have outlasted all changes of literary fashion, and they may still be seen, practically unaltered, in many of our upland villages and hamlets. The example given in this volume is one which has been frequently witnessed by the editors, and there are other variants which yet maintain the form in which they were celebrated by Scott and chronicled by 'sagacious Hone'.¹ Secondly, came the Puppet-shows, or 'motions' as they were technically called, brought, perhaps, from Italy in the wake of commercial intercourse. Bartholomew Fair was a famous place for them, and their vogue became so great that for many years they were serious rivals of the actors. Ostensibly they presented Miracle plays or Moralities—Autolycus in the *Winter's Tale* mentions, among his shifts for a living, that he once 'compassed a motion

¹ See Hone's *Everyday Book*, Vol. II, pp. 1645-8; and Marriott's *English Miracle Plays*, p. xxxv.

of the Prodigal Son'—but the fact that they were played by marionettes allowed them a licence of which they appear sometimes to have taken too full an advantage; in any case authority looked askance at them, planted Master Constable at the street corner, and not infrequently brought the show to a summary conclusion. Thirdly, we find, from the days of Edward IV onward, entertainments called Interludes, given for the most part by companies of professional actors.¹ The meaning and etymology of the name are both in dispute. According to one view they were light and farcical pieces played between the acts of more serious drama, just as in the eighteenth century comic *intermezzi* were given between the acts of opera and oratorio. Another view maintains that, as the Persians invented games to allay hunger, so these interludes were performed in the banqueting-hall to distract the attention of the guests from the customary delays of the service. Mr. Chambers will have neither of these explanations,² and holds that the name means no more than a drama in dialogue—that, in fact, there is nothing to differentiate it from any other theatrical form. It appears probable that in earlier days the name had a more distinctive significance than this: in later days it certainly drifted into the loose and inaccurate nomenclature of the time, and was made to cover dramatic representations of almost any kind or purpose. Many of Lydgate's plays were called Interludes; so were many of the sixteenth-century Moralities; and our example of the *Nice Wanton* can hardly have been intended to amuse the dinner-table, or relieve the tension from a story of martyrdom.

We have here sketched, in brief summary, the formative conditions of the English drama. It

¹ Payne Collier, *History of the English Drama*, Vol. I, p. 27.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, ch. xxiv.

remains to say a word as to the material conditions before we proceed to carry on the record through actual illustration and example. Among these one of the most remarkable is that, up to 1575, there was no such thing as a theatre in England. The early plays were performed in churches or in guild-halls, or on scaffolds in the open air: sometimes sheltered under the walls of an inn-yard, sometimes driven to the road-side or the village green. When the drama became an object of more regular patronage it was transferred to private houses, such as that of Wolsey, or to the Inns of Court, or to the buildings of schools and colleges. *Gorboduc*, 'the first regular English tragedy,' was played at Whitehall by members of the Inner Temple, in 1561; *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, the first two English comedies, were produced, the one apparently at Westminster, the other certainly at Christ's College, Cambridge; Edwards' *Palamon and Arcite* was presented before Queen Elizabeth, to her Majesty's entire satisfaction, in the great hall at Christ Church, Oxford. For centuries all the respectable acting was done by amateurs: by the clergy and their choristers, by members of commercial guilds and learned professions, by boys at school and students at the universities. The professional players were but accepted rogues and vagabonds, constantly watched by the law, liable to arrest and pillory, leading a nomad and gipsy life, and only too thankful if they could eke out their scanty victuals with scraps from my lord's kitchen, or their wardrobes from the cast-off finery of my lord's serving-man. In France the ban lasted even longer than in England. It is notorious that Molière, miscalled by Bossuet 'un infâme histrion', was, for all his Court favour, refused the rites of Christian burial: our country, though more tolerant, learned but slowly to separate toleration from dis-

dain, and the actors never emerged from obscurity until their ranks were ennobled by the accession of Burbage, and Shakespeare, and Edward Alleyn.

Again, it may be noted that the earliest London playhouses were situated outside the precincts of the city, and that two at least resulted from an edict of banishment passed by the Corporation.¹ The 'Theatre' (of which our first mention is dated 1576) was in Shoreditch, the 'Curtain' in Moorfields, the 'Blackfriars' on the site of the old monastery; a little later came the 'Globe' on Bank-side, famous for its connexion with Shakespeare, and the 'Fortune' in Golden Lane built by Alleyn and Henslowe; indeed, by the turn of the century, a petition was presented at Court against the increasing number of these 'publique houses'. But though many of them were erected in 'liberties', and though nearly all of them were under high patronage, they were nevertheless carefully supervised. The Curtain, which bore a bad reputation, was publicly censured in 1601, and ten years later was disused except by amateur companies; the managers, one and all, held their place on a precarious tenure, and might at any moment be turned adrift for a riotous farce or an indiscreet personality. Dekker in his *Gull's Hornbook* has left a vivid picture of unmannerly audiences and quaking players, of the young bloods on the stage, and the 'prentices in the penny gallery; nearly two centuries later the greatest of English actors could stoop to the sycophancy of the line that 'those who live to please must please to live'. Yet it was while the manager stood hat in hand bowing subservience to his patrons that the poets, whom he believed to be in his pay, were conferring on the art its lustre, its renown, and its immortality.

¹ In 1575. See Payne Collier, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 269.

I
TRAGEDIES

CHAPTER I

MIRACLE PLAYS

THE English Miracle plays are of far too wide variety and range to be comprised in a single formula or regarded from a single standpoint. The *Processus Prophetarum* is almost a masque; the *Conversion of Ser Jonathan* is a vivid representation of a miracle wrought 'in the forest of Aragon, in the famous city Eraclea'; the *Temptation* is taken from 'the second of Genesis at letter c in the chapter'; *Antichrist* is a fantastic legend which, in spite of the successive texts, has but little reference to Holy Writ. Even within the limits of the same drama there are wide divergences: the story of the *Flood* is interspersed with farcical scenes; the *Second Shepherds' Play*¹ begins with pure comedy, and ends with adoration of the Babe at Bethlehem. But amid all this range and variety there is one aspect which it is here of moment to consider. English Tragedy took its rise from the liturgical representation of the Passion: from the resignation of Gethsemane and the infinite and mysterious agony of the Cross. Its earliest note, therefore, was struck by an appeal to our sympathy with innocent suffering: first hallowed by the deepest religious associations, then extended to Old Testament narratives in which the religious aspect is still paramount: then again widened to the martyrdom of saints: then, as the drama became secularized,

¹ See later, pp. 158-60.

sinking into mere exhibitions of pain and cruelty. As the glow of Faith faded from it into 'the light of common day' it lost the most potent of its ennobling influences, and as far as it proceeded in this direction degenerated step by step to the unveiled horrors of *Cambyzes* and of the *Spanish Tragedy*.

The manner in which this tendency was modified and diverted by other causes will be investigated later¹: at present we are concerned with an example of Pathetic Tragedy as still purified and restrained by a sacred theme. The following scenes from *Abraham and Isaac* exhibit it in its most touching simplicity. They have none of that conflict of wills, of that balance of competing motives which we have come to regard as the essential idea of tragedy: the father, though his heart 'breaketh in twain', never falters from his purpose; the child, after his first moment of terror, never questions the judgement, but only asks that his mother may not be told, and that the manner of his death may be merciful. The whole situation, in short, is determined by the spectacle of innocence in the face of pain, and of pain inflicted by a loving hand. The entire episode centres round the event, and the two dramatis personae are but the means through which it is brought about.

This strength and concentration of feeling raises the tiny drama, despite its occasional rudeness, to the level of genuine poetry. There is no display of literary artifice, no careful or elaborate phrase; 'from the heart it has come, to the heart it shall penetrate.' Such lines as

My gentle barne that art so wise,
and
For if I be dead and from you go,
I shall be soon out of your mind,

¹ See p. 84 et seq.

hit where many more famous poems have aimed and missed; they have that pulse of immediate and vital significance which we associate with the name of genius. The whole poem is spontaneous and inevitable: it touches the springs of human character, it strikes to the bed-rock from whence we are hewn. Had the mediaeval drama produced nothing but this, it would still be worthy of our regard.

NOTE.—The version here used is that of the Brome Play (between 1470 and 1480), edited by Miss L. Toulmin Smith from a MS. in Brome Hall, Suffolk. There is an earlier version in the fourth Chester Play which is less impressive, and seems to have been adapted more directly from a French original. The same is true of the Towneley and Coventry versions, on which see Payne Collier, Vol. II, pp. 165-168.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

ABRAHAM receives the command to sacrifice ISAAC.

Abraham. Rise up my child, and fast come hither,

My gentle barne¹ that art so wise,
For we two, child, must go together
And unto my Lord make sacrifice.

Isaac. I am full ready, my father, lo!

Even at your hands I stand right here,
And whatsoever ye bid me do

It shall be done with glad cheer,

Full well and fine.

Abraham. Ah! Isaac, my own son so dear

10

God's blessing I give thee and mine.
Hold this faggot upon thy back
And here myself fire shall bring.

Isaac. Father, all this here will I pack;
I am full fain to do thy bidding.

¹ child.

Abraham. Ah ! Lord of Heaven my hands I wring,
This child's words all to-wound my heart.

Now, Isaac son, go we our way

Unto yon Mount, with all our main.

Isaac. Go we, my dear father as fast as I may ; 20

To follow you I am full fain

Although I be slender.

Abraham. Ah ! Lord my heart breaketh in twain
This child's words they be so tender.

[They arrive at the Mount.]

Abraham. Ah ! Isaac son, anon lay it down

No longer upon thy back it hold,

For I must make ready bon ¹

To honour my Lord God as I should.

Isaac. Lo ! my dear father where it is.

To cheer you always I draw near. 30

But father I marvel sore of this,

Why that ye make this heavy cheer ;

And also, father, evermore dread I.

Where is your quick beast that ye should kill ?

Both fire and wood we have ready,

But quick beast have we none on this hill.

A quick beast I wot well must be dead

Your sacrifice to make.

Abraham. Dread thee no-wise my child, I thee reed,

Our Lord will send me unto this stead ² 40

Some manner beast for to take

Through his sweet sond ³.

Isaac. Yea father, but my heart beginneth to quake

To see that sharp sword in your hond.

Why bear ye your sword drawn so ?

Of your countenance I have much wonder.

¹ service.

² place.

³ messenger.

Abraham. Ah ! Father of Heaven, so am I woe
This child here breaks my heart asunder.

Isaac. Tell me, my dear father, or that ye cease,
Bear ye your sword drawn for me ? 50

Abraham. Ah ! Isaac, sweet son, peace, peace !
For i-wis thou break my heart in three.

Isaac. Now truly somewhat, father, ye think
That ye mourn thus more and more.

Abraham. Ah ! Lord of Heaven, thy grace let sink,
For my heart was never half so sore.

Isaac. I pray you, father, that ye will let me that wit,
Whether I shall have any harm or no.

Abraham. I-wis, sweet son, I may not tell thee yet,
My heart is now so full of woe. 60

Isaac. Dear father, I pray you hide it not from me
But some of your thought that ye tell me.

Abraham. Ah ! Isaac, Isaac, I must kill thee.

Isaac. Kill me, father ? Alas ! what evil have I done ?
If I have trespassed against you aught,
With a yard¹ ye may make me full mild ;
And with your sharp sword kill me not,
For i-wis father, I am but a child.

Abraham. I am full sorry son, thy blood for to spill,
But truly, my child, I may not chese². 70

Isaac. Now I would to God my mother were here on
this hill.

She would kneel for me on both her knees
To save my life.

And since my mother is not here,
I pray you father schonge³ your cheer,
And kill me not with your knife.

Abraham. Forsooth, son, but if I⁴ thee kill,
I should grieve God right sore, I dread ;

¹ stick.

² choose.

³ change.

⁴ i. e. if I do not.

It is his commandment and also his will

That I should do this same deed.

80

He commanded me, son, for certain,

To make my sacrifice with thy blood.

Isaac. And is it God's will that I should be slain ?

Abraham. Yea truly Isaac, my son so good,
And therefore my hands I wring.

Isaac. Now father, against my Lord's will

I will never grudge, loud nor still.

He might a sent me a better destiny

If it had a been his pleasure.

Abraham. Forsooth, son, but if I did this deed,
Grievously displeased our Lord will be.

90

Isaac. Nay, nay, father, God forbede

That ever ye should grieve him for me.

Ye have other children one or two

The which ye should love well by kind ¹.

I pray you father, make ye no woe

For be I once dead and from you go

I shall be soon out of your mind.

Therefore do our Lord's bidding

And when I am dead, then pray for me ;

100

But good father, tell my mother nothing,

Say that I am in another country dwelling.

Abraham. Ah ! Isaac, Isaac, blessed may thou be.

My heart beginneth strongly to rise,

To see the blood of thy blessed body.

Isaac. Father since it may be no other wise,

Let it pass over as well as I.

But father, or I go unto my death,

I pray you bless me with your hand.

Abraham. Now Isaac with all my breath

110

My blessing I give thee upon this land.

¹ because of their kinship to you.

And God's also thereto i-wis.

Isaac, Isaac, son up thou stand

Thy fair sweet mouth that I may kiss.

Isaac. Now farewell my own father so fine

And greet well my mother in erde ¹.

But I pray you father to hide my eyne

That I see not the stroke of your sharp sword

That my flesh shall defile.

Abraham. Son, thy words make me to weep full
sore : 120

Now my dear son Isaac, speak no more.

Isaac. Ah ! my own dear father, wherefore ?

We shall speak together here but a while.

And since I must needs be dead,

Yet, my dear father, to you I pray

Smite but few strokes at my head

And make an end as soon as ye may,

And tarry not too long.

Abraham. Thy meek words, child, make me afray ;

So 'welawey', may be my song, 130

Except only God's will.

Ah ! Isaac, my own sweet child,

Yet kiss me again upon this hill.

In all this world is none so mild.

Abraham. Now farewell my child so full of grace.

Isaac. Ah ! father, father, turn downward my face,

For of your sharp sword I am ever a-dread.

Abraham. To do this deed I am full sorry

But Lord thine hest I will not withstand.

Isaac. Ah ! Father of Heaven to thee I cry, 140

Lord receive me into thy hand.

The Angel appears with the ram.

¹ at home.

CHAPTER II

MORALITIES

AFTER the Miracle plays come the Moralities, and for a time the poetry of the English drama declines to a lower level. The reason of this is not far to seek. Literature, which is ostensibly didactic, is from the outset confronted with a double problem: it cannot concentrate itself wholly on the presentation of its subject, but is obliged in addition to consider the moral effect on its audience. Thus, except in cases of rare genius, it shows open signs of a divided attention: it writes with one eye on its theme and the other on its hearer, it becomes self-conscious and professorial, it tends to an academic selection of theses and arguments rather than the entire and whole-hearted expression of essential truth. This does not mean that the truth of art is in any way opposed to the truth of morality;—there is no masterpiece from which we may not learn a hundred lessons if we will;—but nevertheless the standpoint and outlook of the two are inherently different. The artist lays before us an interpretation of life or nature, idealized no doubt and heightened by the touch of beauty, but complete and many-sided as it stands in reality. 'That is what happened,' he says, 'and that is how it happened.' The moralist turns his eye to one aspect, one facet of the event; he lays his whole emphasis on its immediate relation to the moral law: 'this,' he says, 'is good and that is evil, this leads to human happiness and that to misery and downfall.' Shake-

speare did not draw Iago that he might teach us to hate treachery: he drew him because he saw him.

No man can serve two masters, and from the moment that the dramatist's allegiance is thus divided he must of necessity determine his preference. If his aim be didactic, as it was in the Morality plays, he will determine it on the side of moralization: he will pay less attention to his form, he will care less for rounding and completing his characters, his chief aim is the direct contrast of virtues and vices, and to this the whole of his effort will be subordinate. In most of the Moralities the characters are not human beings at all, but personified abstractions—Pity and Contemplation, Perseverance and Idleness;—each marked from the beginning of the play with a uniform rôle which must be sustained throughout. And in the examples here given, though some of the dramatis personae bear human names, they are just as bloodless and unreal as the rest. Xantippe, who has drifted into the list from some odd reminiscence of the class-room, is simply the bad wife; Barnabas is the consoler, and his name is carefully explained in the prologue lest the audience should miss its purport. Eulalia (she who speaks well) is but the embodiment of good counsel; Dalila and Ishmael are incarnate wickedness; Daniel is incarnate judgement. Indeed there is so little depiction of human nature that the two roisterers who come to misery by ill-living are, at the very climax of their riot, represented as school-children; the villain of the piece is plainly entitled Iniquity, and the exulting avenger is called Worldly Shame.

The same indifference to artistic, as distinct from ethical claims, is apparent in the form and composition of this drama. There is, doubtless, a tiny semblance of a plot, but neither in it nor in the scenes through which it is developed, do we find

more than a dim and shadowy reflection of life. The verse, compared with that of the preceding Miracle play, is clumsy and wooden, without music, without colour, with nothing that can satisfy our sense of beauty. And it must be remembered that this is typical of the whole class. Now and again we may find an exception, like the Dutch version of *Everyman*¹, which appeals to us by stately pageant or dignified phrase: for the most part the Moralities are but dramatized sermons which lack the full measure of the preacher's eloquence. The lessons that they inculcate are admirable: the sentences are often halting and ill-expressed. Yet it is no paradox to say that both in form and in characterization they added an important chapter to the history of the English Theatre. Their very carelessness of style tended to disintegrate the lyric metres of the Miracle plays, to familiarize men's ears with a looser system, and so to prepare for the long swinging lines of Udall, the unrhymed heroics of Sackville, and the prose of Gascoigne², as these in their turn marked that period of revolution which led to the dynasty of Peele and Marlowe and Shakespeare. Again, though they never set a complete character on the stage, they nevertheless made genuine attempts to present single facets, and the value of this, even when wrought in so primitive a manner, should not be underestimated. The characterization of the great dramatists is an adjustment between the prominent aspect which is needed for the requirements of a three-hours' plot, and the subordinate aspects which are needed to convince us that the person depicted is a human being. On the one hand every character is a strand in the web, and must bear his

¹ This is the version recently performed in England.

² For Udall and Sackville see later, pp. 161-74 and 84-84. Gascoigne's play, called *The Supposes* (1566), was the first English drama in prose. See Payne Collier, Vol. III, p. 6.

part in the general texture and design ; on the other hand, if the play is to give us any impression of reality, it must not be a counterchange of isolated qualities, but an intercourse of possible men and women. Shylock, for example, stands in the *Merchant of Venice* for the implacable creditor: that is the side of his nature on the prominence of which the whole intrigue depends ; yet with a hundred subtle touches Shakespeare paints his other qualities into the background: his loyalty to his religion, his love of his daughter, and, we may even add, his personal dignity. But before the drama can arrive at Shylock it must have passed through the period of Ishmael and Dalila. The 'separate single forms', as Cleon calls them, the 'portions of mankind', must be first represented in crude isolation before they can be fused and unified by the hand of genius.

We may go a step further. All through our literature there is a recurrent tendency to falsify the perspective of character, even beyond dramatic needs, in order to throw the high light on some special point which it is desired to emphasize. Even Jonson, great dramatist as he was, occasionally gives us 'humours' instead of people: Wycherley can see nothing in Manly but a brutal candour, Sheridan can see little in Joseph Surface but a smooth hypocrisy. In lesser men this tendency is often underlined by the use of catch-words; in almost all it is pointed by the application of significant names. And here again we may trace a legacy from the Morality plays. 'Iniquity' and 'Worldly Shame' are the direct ancestors of Jonson's 'Downright' and Middleton's 'Folly-wit'; of 'Millamant' and 'Lord Foppington' and 'Sir Lucius O'Trigger'; in a word, of all that long course of nomenclature in which the central characteristic is designated by the actual word. Even the greatest name-givers occasionally slip into this practice: Shakespeare himself has

'Goodman Dull' and 'Justice Shallow': but they keep the obvious device for their minor characters, and call their protagonists by names either of historic note or of a subtler and more recondite suggestion.

Enough has been said to show that the Moralities hold a sufficient place in the development of our drama: it remains to add a word on the remarkably short space of time within which this development proceeded. The *Nice Wanton*, written apparently in the reign of Edward VI, was licensed in 1560: Shakespeare's earliest play was produced in 1592. The growth of the modern theatre has usually been rapid. Lessing overlapped with Klopstock and Corneille with Hardy, but there is probably no parallel, in the history of dramatic literature, to so swift a change between the childhood of art and its full maturity.

NICE WANTON¹

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

THE MESSENGER.

BARNABAS.	INIQUITY.
ISHMAEL.	BAILY ERRAND.
DALILA.	XANTIPPE.
EULALIA.	WORLDLY SHAME.

DANIEL, the Judge.

PROLOGUE.

Enter MESSENGER.

The prudent Prince Solomon doth say

'He that spareth the rod, the child doth hate';

He would youth should be kept in awe alway

By correction in time, at reasonable rate,

¹ 'Nice' here is used to imply misconduct, and 'wanton' absence of restraint. See l. 58, and compare Rastell, *Pastyme Hist. Brit.*, 158, 'He . . . put out of his Court all nyce and wanton people.'

To be taught to fear God, and their parents obey,
 To get learning and qualities thereby to maintain
 An honest quiet life, correspondent alway
 To God's law and the King's; for it is certain
 If children be noseled¹ in idleness and ill
 And brought up therein, it is hard to restrain 10
 And draw them from natural wont evil,
 As here in this Interlude ye shall see plain
 By two children brought up wantonly in play,
 Whom the mother doth excuse when she should
 chastise:
 They delight in dalliance and mischief alway;
 At last they end their lives in miserable wise.
 The mother, persuaded by Worldly Shame
 That she was the cause of their wretched life,
 So pensive, so sorrowful for their death she became
 That in despair she would slay herself with a knife. 20
 Then her son Barnabas—by interpretation
 'The son of comfort'—her ill purpose to stay,
 By the Scriptures he giveth her godly consolation;
 And so concludeth. All these parts will we play.

BARNABAS cometh.²

Barn. My master in my lesson yesterday
 Did recite this text of Ecclesiasticus:
 'Man is prone to evil from his youth,' did he say;
 Which sentence may be well verified in us,—
 Myself, my brother, and sister Dalila,
 Whom our parents to their cost to school do find, 30
 I tarry for them here; time passeth away
 I lose my learning; they ever loiter behind.

¹ brought up, lit. 'nursed'.² There is no division into acts or scenes.

If I go before, they do me threat
 To complain to my mother; she for their sake,
 Being her tender tidlings¹, will me beat.

Lord, in this perplexity what way shall I take?

What will become of them? Grace God them send
 To apply their learning, and their manners amend.

[ISHMAEL and DALILA come in singing.]

Barnabas reproves them, but they jeer at him and drive him away.

Dal. Oh good brother, let us go;
 I will never more to school.
 Shall I never know
 What pastime meaneth?
 Yes, I will not be such a fool.

40

Ishm. Have with thee, Dalila!

[*They sing.*]

Farewell our school.

Away with book and all, [*They cast away their books.*

I will set my heart
 On a merry pin
 Whatever shall befall.

[*They go out singing. Enter EULALIA.*]

Eul. Lord, what folly is in youth;
 How unhappy be children nowadays!
 And more the pity, to say the truth,
 Their parents maintain them in evil ways,
 Which is great cause that the world decays
 For children brought up in idleness and play
 Unthrifty and disobedient continue away.

50

¹ darlings.

A neighbour of mine hath children hereby,
 Idle, disobedient, proud, wanton and nice¹
 As they come by they do shrewd turns² daily;
 Their parents so to suffer them surely be not wise; 80
 They laugh me to scorn when I tell them mine advice;
 I will speak to their elders and warn them neighbourly.
 Never in better time—their mother is hereby.

[Enter XANTIPPE.]

Eul. God save you, gossip! I am very fain
 That you chance now to come this way;
 I long to talk with you a word or twain
 I pray you take it friendly that I shall say.
 Ishmael, your son, and your daughter Dalila
 Do me shrewd turns daily more and more,
 Chide and beat my children—it grieveth me sore. 70

They swear, curse, and scold as they go by the way,
 Giving others ill example to do the same,
 To God's displeasure, and their hurt another day.
 Chastise them for it, or else ye be to blame.

Xant. Tush, tush! If ye have no more than that to say
 Ye may hold your tongue and get ye away.
 Alas! poor souls, they sit a' school all day
 In fear of a churl; and if a little they play
 He beateth them like a devil. When they come home
 Your mistresship would have me lay on. 80
 If I should beat them so oft as men complain,
 By the mass! within this month I should make them
 lame.

Eul. Be not offended, I pray you; I must say more:
 Your son is suspect light-fingered to be;
 Your daughter hath nice tricks three or four;

¹ See note on title.

² malicious tricks.

See to it in time, lest worse ye do see.
 He that spareth the rod, hateth the child truly ;
 Yet Solomon sober correction doth mean,
 Not to beat and bounce them to make them lame.

Xant. God thank you, mistress, I am well at ease. 90

[*Aside*] Such a fool to teach me, preaching as she please !

Dame, ye belie them deadly ; I know plain

Because they go handsomely ye disdain.

Eul. Then on the other as well would I complain ;

But your other son is good, and no thank to you !

These will ye make naught, by sweet Jesu !

Xant. Eulalia, my children naught ? Ye lie.

By your malice they shall not set a fly¹.

I have but one mome² in comparison of his brother,—

Him the fool praiseth, and despiseth the other. 100

Eul. Well, Xantippe, better in time than too late !

Seeing ye take it so, here my leave I take. [*Exit.*]

.
INIQUITY, ISHMAEL, and DALILA come in together [singing].

Iniq. Lo ! lo ! here I bring her.

Ishm. What is she, now ye have her ?

Dal. I, lusty minion lover ?

Iniq. For no gold will I give her.

All together. Welcome my honey, ay.

In a little while Iniquity and Dalila quarrel, and he beats her. They become reconciled however, on the ground that 'kinsfolk must be friends', and all three play dice.

Ishmael loses, and goes out vowing that he will make up for his losses by robbing the next person that he meets, though it should be his own father.

¹ i. e. They will think nothing of your malice.

² Simpleton : referring to Barnabas. A Cotswold Gotham used to be known as 'Yabberton where the momes do live'.

Dalila and Iniquity quarrel again, over their winnings. He strikes her, and she threatens to be revenged on him.

[*A long interval.*]

*DALILA cometh in ragged, her face hid or disfigured,
halting on a staff.*

Dal. Alas, wretched wretch that I am !

Most miserable caitiff that ever was born !

Full of pain and sorrow, crooked and lame, 110

Stuffed with diseases, in this world forlorn.

My parents did tittle¹ me,—they were to blame,—

Instead of correction, in ill did me maintain.

I fell to naught and shall die with shame.

Yet all this is not half of my grief and pain.

The worm of my conscience, that shall never die

Accuseth me daily more and more.

So oft have I sinned wilfully

That I fear to be damned for evermore.

[*Enter BARNABAS.*]

Barn. What woful wight art thou, tell me, 120

That here most grievously doth lament ?

Confess the truth, and I will comfort thee

By the word of God Omnipotent.

Although your time you have misspent

Repent and amend while ye have space,

And God will restore you to health and grace.

Dalila tells him that she is his sister, and Barnabas, after pointing out the folly of evil ways, promises to help her.

¹ indulge.

Barn. But so repent that ye sin no more,
 And then believe with steadfast faith
 That God will forgive you for evermore
 For Christ's sake as the Scripture saith. 130

As for your body, if it be curable
 I will cause to be healed, or during your life
 I will clothe you and feed you as I am able.
 Come, sister, go with me ; ye have need of relief.
 [*They go.*]

In the next scene Ishmael is being tried for 'felony, burglary, and murder'. He declares that it is Iniquity who has led him into wrongdoing. Iniquity protests his innocence, but the Judge condemns them both to be hanged. After they have been led to execution, Worldly Shame and Xantippe enter. Worldly Shame tells the wretched mother of the miserable death of both Dalila and Ishmael. Xantippe is about to kill herself, when Barnabas enters.

Barn. Beware what ye do. Fie, mother, fie !
 Will ye spill¹ yourself for your own offence,
 And seem forever to exclude God's mercy ?
 God doth punish you for your negligence ;
 Wherefore take His correction with patience,
 And thank Him heartily of His goodness, 140
 He bringeth you in knowledge of your trespass.

Yet in this we may all take comfort :
 They took great repentance, I heard say.
 And as for my sister, I am able to report
 She lamented for her sins to her dying day.
 To repent and believe I exhorted her alway.
 Before her death she believed that God, of His mercy,
 For Christ's sake would save her eternally.

¹ destroy.

If you do even so you need not despair,
For God will freely remit your sins all. 150
Christ hath paid the ransom ; why should ye fear ?
To believe this and do well, to God for grace call ;
All worldly cares let pass and fall ;
And thus comfort my father, I pray you heartily.
I have a little to say, I will come by and by.

[XANTIPPE *goeth out.*

Barnabas then addresses the audience, bidding all parents take warning by 'this interlude'. The whole concludes with a prayer for 'the Queen's Royal Majesty' and for the kingdom in general.

CHAPTER III

THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL

THE wave of Classical learning which spread during the fifteenth century from Florence touched our shores about the beginning of the Tudor period. Before that time our current erudition had been restricted to a close and intimate knowledge of French and a kind of colloquial Latin,¹ which at its highest could read Boethius, and at its lowest sank to a debased and almost unrecognizable jargon. The early plays, for instance, are interspersed with passages and texts from the Vulgate, and with occasional transcriptions from their French originals; but they show no further acquaintance with letters, and we have some reason for doubting whether it was only opportunity that failed them. In the Morality play of *Mankind*, written during the reign of Edward IV, the Vice celebrates the blessings of the harvest-field in a verse which runs—

Corn servit bredibus, chaff horsibus, straw firibusque.

This is significant, even for burlesque, and that it is not extravagant burlesque may be shown by many illustrations from the time of Roger Bacon to that of Erasmus. However, the new learning, when once established, was of rapid and continuous growth. Linacre and Colet reorganized the teaching at

¹ In 1375 the library of Oriel College, Oxford, then one of the best in England, contained not a single classical text. A century later, Caxton translated the *Aeneid* 'out of French', and he is severely criticized by Gawin Douglas for showing no knowledge of the original.

Oxford, More carried their tradition into the world of affairs, the Classics were collected, reprinted, disseminated, grammars were re-edited and revised, every schoolboy was set to his Priscian, every gentleman of condition was expected to show some familiarity with Tully and Terence, until by the middle of the sixteenth century scholarship had become a fashionable accomplishment.

The first effect of this upon the English drama was the production of Classical plays at our schools and universities. The *Menaechmi* and the *Phormio* were given by the boys of St. Paul's in 1527 and 1528: in 1536 the *Plutus* of Aristophanes was performed at St. John's College, Cambridge, the *Pax* at Trinity College a few years later. It should be observed that these early examples are all Comedies¹: about the middle of the century a body of scholars under Jasper Heywood began to translate the Tragedies of Seneca, and from thence for about twenty years the severer form was in vogue. In many ways Seneca was an unfortunate choice, but Roman Tragedy offered no alternative, and the knowledge of Greek was still in its infancy. At any rate, he became the model of our English playwrights; and his academic tirades, of which even the rhetoric fails to impress, were held to be compensated by his unquestionable morals, and by the sagacity of his political maxims:—

The sage and witty Seneca his words thereto did frame :
 'The honest exercise of kings men will ensue the same ;
 But contrariwise, if that a king abuse his kingly seat,
 His ignominy and bitter shame in price shall be more great'.

This is undeniably profitable, but it does not take high rank as dramatic literature.

The influence of Classical learning, for good and

¹ See later, p. 175 et seq.

ill, may be well illustrated by two extreme cases which, though not actually contemporary, fall within the same decade. Preston's *Cambyses*, published in 1569, is probably the worst piece of work ever produced by a man of culture and education. Its author was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, who, we are told, exhibited such prowess as actor and public disputant that Queen Elizabeth presented him with a pension of £20 a year. If so, he must have forgotten both his logic and his experience of stagecraft when he wrote this rambling disconnected play. The main plot, derived from a story in Herodotus, is so broken in sequence and so unaccountable in motive that it wearies the reader's attention; the tragic episodes are mere bloodshed; the pathos is borrowed, and marred in the borrowing¹; the style, from which the four lines given above are fairly quoted, has turned 'Cambyses' vein' into a byword²; the characters are gathered incongruously from every corner under heaven — Smerdis and Sisamnes, Diligence and Small Hability, Proof and Trial, Cruelty and Murder, Huf, Ruf, and Snuf, the 'three ruffins', Ambidexter the Vice, who takes his only jest from the *Thersites* of Ravisius, and whose villainous informations are accepted without question even when he admits that they are untrue. Historically the play is of interest as combining the Moralities of an earlier age with the Tragedies of a later³: apart from this it has very little claim to our consideration.

Its failure is the more noteworthy because it was preceded, at some eight years' distance, by a play in which the new learning is turned to incomparably

¹ Compare the death of Prexaspes' child (ll. 540-55) with *Abraham and Isaac*.

² 'I must speak in passion,' says Falstaff, 'and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein.' See *Henry IV*, Part I, Act ii. sc. 4.

³ Even of this a better and earlier example may be found in Bale's *King John*. See Part III, ch. ii, of this volume.

better account. *Gorboduc*, by Norton and Sackville, is not only 'the first regular English Tragedy', it is also a striking example of that still and sculpturesque ideal which is often called by the name of Classical. In form it follows the plan of Seneca: it is divided into five acts, of which the first four are closed by a chorus, and the fifth, superfluous to the plot, with an epilogue; as a further development it begins each act with a pageant in dumb show, indicating, by allegory or suggestion, the principal episode which is to follow. The fable is taken from a legend in Geoffrey of Monmouth (II. xvi), which narrates how Gorboduc, king of Britain, proposed to divide the kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex; how Ferrex, who should have succeeded to all, rose at his mother's instigation in revolt, and how there followed an internecine strife which cost the lives of both princes, and which plunged the entire realm in the miseries of civil war. The treatment is throughout that of a Classical Tragedy. The plot moves onward in slow and deliberate course, weighted with disputation and dialogue and long declamatory speeches: the whole tragic action takes place off the stage, and the audience learns it indirectly by report. In the spectacle presented there is not a blow struck or a sword drawn: its most vivid moment is when Gorboduc breaks in, with a fierce retort, upon the penitence of his younger son. Yet within the narrow limits there is some real characterization. Ferrex and Porrex are well contrasted: the one tardy and unstable, loath to believe that he has been wronged, hesitating, when he learns the truth, between revenge and affection, brooding on his wrath till he stoops to a treacherous reprisal; the other quick, hot-headed and impulsive, killing in self-defence and bitterly repenting afterwards. Videna, too, though she is tuned too much in one key, is clearly

and consistently set forth. Grant that such a plot were possible, and her part in it is as inevitable as fate. And through the whole grim story there is a consistent dignity and nobility of tone. It has no rant, no fustian, no sensationalism; it is as far removed from 'Cambyzes' vein' as from the crude horrors of Sisamnes' execution; if it never excites, it equally never repels: in an age when men were trying to reach the sublime by piling Pelion on Ossa, torture on assassination, it stands aside from the press and will use no device but that of a restrained, sober eloquence.

It has a further point of interest as being the first English drama written in blank verse. Some twenty years had elapsed since the new form was introduced by Surrey's translations from the *Aeneid*; but during that time it had been seldom or never employed, and we may well give Norton and Sackville the credit of its revival. Throughout the work we can see evidences of the experimenter's hand. In some places the heroic measure seems to have instinctively suggested a rhyme, or at least an assonance: in many places the rhythm is stiff and unyielding, not yet made tractable by the skill of the artificer. Yet it has some stateliness of movement; it never sinks below its level; it is like the organ-music of the first German composers in comparison with Bach, and it is far nearer to the great melodists who followed it than to the dull and lifeless diction of the Moralities which it superseded.

Beside *Gorboduc* and *Cambyzes* there were produced, between 1560 and 1580, many tragedies which show Classical influence in topic or treatment. Among them may be mentioned *King Darius* and *Appius and Virginia*, which belong rather to the later Moralities; Gascoigne's *Jocasta* (1566), Pickering's *Orestes* (about 1567), anonymous plays on *Iphigenia*, *Ajax*, *Narcissus*, and *Paris* (about 1570-1),

and, on subjects from Roman history, *Quintus Fabius* (1573), *Tullia* and *Mucius Scaevola* (1576), and *Scipio Africanus* (1579). Stephen Gosson, who in 1579 came forward as an opponent of the drama, is at some pains to exclude from his censure a tragedy of his own on *Catiline*.

THOMAS NORTON (1532-84) was the son of a wealthy citizen of London. In early life he entered the household of the Protector Somerset as amanuensis, and soon distinguished himself by his learning and his enthusiasm for the Protestant Reformation. In 1555 he became a student of the Inner Temple, shortly afterwards he married Margery, the daughter of Archbishop Cranmer, and in 1558 he became Member of Parliament for Gatten. His early writings consisted partly of theological tracts, partly of songs and sonnets (some of which were commended by Jasper Heywood), and this double allegiance was curiously illustrated in 1561 when he simultaneously translated the *Institutes* of Calvin and produced the tragedy of *Gorboduc* in collaboration with Sackville. A note to the pirated edition of 1565 informs us that Norton wrote the first three acts and Sackville the last two; a division which perhaps accounts for the more chivalrous tone of the later part. In 1562 he sat for Berwick, in 1570 he was made Remembrancer of the City of London, and next year he was elected one of the members for the City. The rest of his life was spent in religious controversy. An aggressive and Calvinistic Protestant, he employed his terms of office in rigorous persecution of the Roman Catholics, he was twice imprisoned for attacking the English Bishops, and on the second occasion, when he was sent to the Tower, owed his liberation entirely to the influence of his friend Walsingham. He died at the age of fifty-two, leaving behind him the reputation of a good debater, a capable man of letters, and a vehement and untiring partisan.

For THOMAS SACKVILLE, first Earl of Dorset and Baron Buckhurst, see Vol. I, p. 224.

GORBODUC ;
OR FERREX AND PORREX

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

GORBODUC, King of Great Britain.

VIDENA, Queen, and wife to King Gorboduc.

FERREX, elder son to King Gorboduc.

PORREX, younger son to King Gorboduc.

CLOTYN, Duke of Cornwall.

FERGUS, Duke of Albany.

MANDUD, Duke of Leogris.

GWENARD, Duke of Cumberland.

EUBULUS, Secretary to the King.

AROSTUS, a Counsellor to the King.

DORDAN, a Counsellor assigned

by the King to his eldest son Ferrex.

PHILANDER, a Counsellor assigned by the King to his youngest son Porrex.

Both being of the old king's council before.

HERMON, a parasite remaining with Ferrex.

TYNDAR, a parasite remaining with Porrex.

NUNTIUS, a messenger of the elder brother's death.

NUNTIUS, a messenger of Duke Fergus rising in arms.

MARCELLA, a lady of the Queen's privy-chamber.

CHORUS, four ancient and sage men of Britain.

[Scene : Britain.]

**THE ORDER OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE FIRST
ACT, AND THE SIGNIFICATION THEREOF.**

First the music of violins began to play, during which came in upon the stage six wild men clothed in leaves ; of whom the first bore in his neck a faggot of small sticks which they all, both severally and together, assayed with all their strengths to break, but it could not be broken by them. At the length one of them plucked out one of the sticks and brake it, and the rest plucking out all the other sticks one after another did easily break

them, the same being severed, which, being conjoined, they had before attempted in vain. After they had this done they departed the stage; and the music ceased. Hereby was signified that a state knit in unity doth continue strong against all force, but being divided is easily destroyed; as befell upon Duke Gorboduc dividing his land to his two sons, which he before held in monarchy, and upon the dissension of the brethren to whom it was divided.

ACTUS PRIMUS. SCENA PRIMA.

[*A room in Gorboduc's Palace.*]

VIDENA, FERREX.

Vid. The silent night that brings the quiet pause
From painful travail of the weary day,
Prolongs my careful thoughts, and makes me blame
The slow Aurore, that so for love or shame
Doth long delay to show her blushing face ;
And now the day renews my grief-ful plaint.

Ferr. My gracious lady and my mother dear,
Pardon my grief for your so grieved mind,
To ask what cause tormenteth so your heart.

Vid. So great a wrong, and so unjust despite
Without all cause, against all course of kind¹. 10

Ferr. Such causeless wrong, and so unjust despite
May have redress, or at the least revenge.

Vid. Neither, my son ; such is the froward will,
The person such, such my mishap and thine.

Ferr. Mine know I none but grief for your distress.

Vid. Yes, mine for thine, my son. A father? No :
In kind a father, not in kindliness.

¹ kinship.

Ferr. My father ? Why I know nothing at all
Wherein I have misdono unto his Grace. 20

Vid. Therefore the more unkind to thee and me !
For knowing well, my son, the tender love
That I have ever borne, and bear to thee,
He, grieved thereat, is not content alone
To spoil thee of my sight, my chiefest joy,
But thee of thy birthright and heritage,
Causeless, unkindly, and in wrongful wise,
Against all law and right he will bereave :
Half of his kingdom he will give away.

Ferr. To whom ?

Vid. Even to Porrex, his younger son, 30
Whose growing pride I do so sore suspect
That, being raised to equal rule with thee,
Methinks I see his envious heart to swell,
Filled with disdain and with ambitious hope.
The end the gods do know, whose altars I
Full oft have made in vain of cattle slain
To send the sacred smoke to Heaven's throne
For thee, my son, if things do so succeed ¹
As now my jealous mind misdeemeth sore.

Ferrex refuses to believe that his father can be so unjust, or that he could ever win the consent of his Council to the division of the kingdom. But Gorboduc has his way, and the act ends with the lamentation of the Chorus, who foresee the ruin of the country.

After a dumbshow in which 'a grave and aged gentleman' offers a glass of wine to the king, which he refuses; and a 'brave and lusty young gentleman' offers a golden cup of poison, which the king drinks, the second act opens at the court of Ferrex who is much incensed at being deprived of half the kingdom. Hermon urges him to make war on his brother.

¹ follow.

The next scene is at the court of Porrex, where news has just been received that Ferrex is making preparation for war. Porrex determines to be first in the field.

The Chorus utter a lament over the results of evil counsel.

THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB SHOW
BEFORE THE THIRD ACT.

First the music of flutes began to play, during which came in upon the stage a company of mourners all clad in black, betokening death and sorrow to ensue upon the ill-advised misgovernment and dissension of brethren : as befell upon the murder of Ferrex by his younger brother. After the mourners had passed thrice about the stage, they departed ; and then the music ceased. 7

ACTUS TERTIUS. SCENA PRIMA.

[*The Court of Gorboduc.*]

GORBODUC, EUBULUS, AROSTUS [*are present at the opening of the scene*], PHILANDER, NUNTIUS [*enter later*].

Gorb. O cruel Fates, O mindful wrath of gods !
Whose vengeance neither Simois ¹ stained streams
Flowing with blood of Trojan princes slain,
Nor Phrygian fields made rank with corpses dead
Of Asian kings and lords, can yet appease ;
Ne slaughter of unhappy Priam's race
Nor Ilion's fall, made level with the soil,
Can yet suffice ; but still-continued rage
Pursues our lives, and from the farthest seas
Doth chase the issues of destroyed Troy. 10
Oh, no man happy till his end be seen.
If any flowing wealth and seeming joy

¹ A river near Troy. All the allusions in this speech are to the story of the Trojan war.

In present years might make a happy wight,
 Happy was Hecuba, the wofullest wretch
 That ever lived to make a mirror of ;
 And happy Priam with his noble sons ;
 And happy I, till now, alas, I see
 And feel my most unhappy wretchedness.
 Behold, my lords, read ye this letter here.
 Lo, it contains the ruin of our realm, 20
 If timely speed provide not hasty help.
 Yet, O ye gods, if ever woful king
 Might move ye, kings of kings, wreak it on me
 And on my sons, not on this guiltless realm.
 Send down your wasting flames from wrathful skies
 To 'reave me and my sons the hateful breath.
 Read, read, my lords. This is the matter why
 I called ye now, to have your good advice.

The letter from Dordan, the Counsellor of the elder prince.

EUBULUS readeth the letter :

'My sovereign Lord, what I am loath to write,
 But loathest am to see, that I am forced 30
 By letters now to make you understand :
 My lord Ferrex, your eldest son, misled
 By traitorous fraud of young, untempered wits
 Assembleth force against your younger son,
 Ne can my counsel yet withdraw the heat
 And furious pangs of his inflamed head.
 Disdain, saith he, of his disheritance
 Arms him to wreak the great pretended wrong
 With civil sword upon his brother's life.
 If present help do not restrain this rage 40
 This flame will waste your sons, your land, and you.
 Your Majesty's faithful and most humble subject
 DORDAN.'

Aros. O king, appease your grief and stay your plaint.
Great is the matter, and a woful case ;
But timely knowledge may bring timely help.
Send for them both unto your presence here :
The reverence of your honour, age, and state,
Your grave advice, the awe of father's name,
Shall quickly knit again this broken peace.
And if in either of my lords your sons
Be such untamed and unyielding pride
As will not bend unto your noble hests,—
If Ferrex, the elder son can bear no peer,
Or Porrex, not content, aspires to more
Than you him gave above his native right,—
Join with the juster side ; so shall you force
Them to agree, and hold the land in stay.

50

Eub. What meaneth this ? Lo, yonder comes in haste
Philander from my lord your younger son.

[*Enter PHILANDER.*]

Gorb. The gods send joyful news !

Phil.

The mighty Jove 60

Preserve your Majesty, O noble king.

Gorb. Philander, welcome. But how doth my son ?

Phil. Your son, sir, lives, and healthy I him left.

But yet, O king, the want of lustful health
Could not be half so grief-ful to your Grace
As the most wretched tidings that I bring.

Gorb. O Heavens, yet more ? Not end of woes to me ?

Phil. Tyndar, O king, came lately from the court

Of Ferrex to my lord your younger son,
And made report of great prepared store
For war, and saith that it is wholly meant
Against Porrex, for high disdain that he
Lives now a king, and equal in degree

70

With him that claimeth to succeed the whole
As by due title and descending right.
Porrex is now so set on flaming fire,
Partly with kindled rage of cruel wrath,
Partly with hope to gain a realm thereby,
That he in haste prepareth to invade
His brother's land, and with unkindly war
Threatens the murder of your elder son.
Ne could I him persuade that first he should
Send to his brother to demand the cause,
Nor yet to you, to stay this hateful strife.
Wherefore sith there no more I can be heard
I come myself now to inform your Grace
And to beseech you, as you love the life
And safety of your children and your realm
Now to employ your wisdom and your force
To stay this mischief ere it be too late.

80

90

Gorb. Are they in arms? Would he not send to me?
Is this the honour of a father's name?
In vain we travail to assuage their minds,
As if their hearts, whom neither brother's love
Nor father's awe, nor kingdom's cares can move,
Our counsels could withdraw from raging heat.
Jove slay them both, and end the cursed line.
For though perhaps fear of such mighty force
As I, my lords, joined with your noble aids,
May yet raise, shall repress their present heat,
The secret grudge and malice will remain.
The fire not quenched, but kept in close restraint
Fed still within, breaks forth with double flame.
Their death and mine must 'pease the angry gods.

100

Phil. Yield not, O king, to so much weak despair.
Your sons yet live, and long, I trust, they shall.
If Fates had taken you from earthly life

Before beginning of this civil strife,
 Perhaps your sons in their unmastered youth,
 Loose from regard of any living wight, 110
 Would run on headlong, with unbridled race,
 To their own death, and ruin of this realm ;
 But sith the gods that have the care for kings,
 Of things and times dispose the order so
 That in your life this kindled flame breaks forth
 While yet your life, your wisdom, and your power
 May stay the growing mischief, and repress
 The fiery blaze of their enkindled heat,
 It seems—and so ye ought to deem thereof—
 That loving Jove hath tempered so the time 120
 Of this debate to happen in your days
 That you yet living may the same appease
 And add it to the glory of your latter age,
 And they, your sons, may learn to live in peace.
 Beware, O king, the greatest harm of all
 Lest by your wailful complaints your hastened death
 Yield larger room unto their growing rage.
 Preserve your life, the only hope of stay.
 And if your Highness list herein to use
 Wisdom or force, counsel or knightly aid, 130
 Lo, we, our persons, powers, and lives are yours :
 Use us till death, O king, we are your own.

Eub. Lo, here the peril that was erst foreseen,
 When you, O king, did first divide your land
 And yield your present reign unto your sons.
 But now, O noble prince, now is no time
 To wail and plain, and waste your woful life.
 Now is the time for present good advice.
 Sorrow doth dark the judgement of the wit.
 The heart unbroken and the courage free 140
 From feeble faintness of bootless despair

Doth either rise to safety or renown
 By noble valure of vanquished mind,
 Or yet doth perish in more happy sort.
 Your Grace may send to either of your sons
 Some one both wise and noble personage
 Which with good counsel and with weighty name
 Of father shall present before their eyes
 Your best, your life, your safety and their own,
 The present mischief of their deadly strife. 150
 And in the while, assemble you the force
 Which your commandment and the speedy haste
 Of all my lords here present can prepare.
 The terror of your mighty power shall stay
 The rage of both, or yet of one at least.

[Enter NUNTIVS.]

Nunt. O king, the greatest grief that ever prince did hear,
 That ever woful messenger did tell,
 That ever wretched land hath seen before,
 I bring to you. Porrex, your younger son,
 With sudden force invaded hath the land 160
 That you to Ferrex did allot to rule,
 And with his own most bloody hand he hath
 His brother slain, and doth possess his realm.

Gorb. O Heavens, send down the flames of your
 revenge!
 Destroy, I say, with flash of wreakful fire
 The traitor son, and then the wretched sire.
 But let us go, that yet perhaps I may
 Die with revenge, and 'pease the hateful¹ gods. [Exeunt.

Chorus.

The lust of kingdom knows no sacred faith,
 No rule of reason, no regard of right, 170

¹ i. e. full of hate towards us.

No kindly love, no fear of heaven's wrath ;
 But with contempt of gods, and man's despite,
 Through bloody slaughter doth prepare the ways
 To fatal sceptre and accursed reign.
 The son so loathes the father's lingering days,
 Ne dreads his hand in brother's blood to stain.
 O wretched prince, ne dost thou yet record
 The yet fresh murders done within the land
 Of thy forefathers, when the cruel sword
 Bereft Morgan¹ his life with cousin's hand ? 180
 Thus fatal plagues pursue the guilty race
 Whose murd'rous hand, imbued with guiltless blood,
 Asks vengeance still before the heaven's face
 With endless mischief on the cursed brood.
 The wicked child thus brings to woful sire
 The mournful plaints to waste his very life.
 Thus do the cruel flames of civil fire
 Destroy the parted reign with hateful strife,
 And hence doth spring the well from which doth flow
 The dead black streams of mourning and of woe. 190

END OF THIRD ACT.

ACTUS QUARTUS. SCENA SECUNDA.

The first scene is a soliloquy of Videna, planning the death of Porrex in revenge for his brother's murder. In the second scene Porrex is summoned to the Court to answer for himself. He speaks as follows :—

Porr. Neither, O king, I can or will deny
 But that this hand from Ferrex life hath reft :

¹ Morgan, prince of Cumberland, was killed by his cousin (or brother) Cunedagius in a quarrel about the kingdom. See Geoffrey of Monmouth, II. xv.

Which fact ¹ how much my doleful heart doth wail
 Oh ! would it might as full appear to sight
 As inward grief would pour it forth to me :
 So yet, perhaps, if ever ruthful heart
 Melting in tears within a manly breast
 Through deep repentance of his bloody past,
 If ever grief, if ever woful man
 Might move regret with sorrow of his fault,
 I think the torment of my mournful case,
 Known to your Grace, as I do feel the same,
 Would force e'en wrath herself to pity me.

10

Not that I rest in hope with plaint and tears
 To purchase life : for to the gods I clepe ²
 For true record of this my faithful speech.
 Never this heart shall have the thoughtful ³ dread
 To die the death that by your Grace's doom
 By just desert shall be pronounced to me ;
 Nor never shall this tongue once spend the speech
 Pardon to crave, or seek by suit to live :
 I mean not this as though I were not touched
 With care of dreadful death, or that I held
 Life in contempt : but that I know the mind
 Stoops to no dread, although the flesh be frail ;
 And for my guilt I yield ⁴ the same so great
 As in myself I feel a fear to sue
 For grant of life.

20

Gor. In vain, O wretch, thou shewest
 A woful heart : Ferrex now lies in 's grave
 Slain by thy hand.

Porr. Yet this, O father, hear ;
 And then I end. Your Majesty well knows
 That when my brother Ferrex and myself

30

¹ deed. ² call. ³ apprehensive. ⁴ confess.

By your own hest were joined in governance
 Of this your Grace's realm of Britain's land,
 I never sought nor travailed for the same :
 Nor by myself, nor by no friend I wrought,
 But from your Highness' will alone it sprung,
 Of your most gracious goodness bent to me.
 But how my brother's heart even then repined
 With swoll'n disdain against mine equal rule, 40
 Seeing that realm which by descent should grow
 Wholly to him allotted half to me.

Yet I that judged it my part to seek
 His favour and goodwill, and loath to make
 Your Highness know the thing that should have brought
 Grief, to your Grace, and your offence to him,
 Hoping my earnest suit should soon have won
 A loving heart within a brother's breast,
 Wrought in that sort that for a pledge of love
 And faithful heart he gave to me his hand. 50

But after we had left your Grace's court,
 And from your Highness' presence lived apart,
 This equal rule still, still did grudge him so
 That now those envious sparks, which erst lay raked
 In living cinders of dissembling breast,
 Kindled so far within his heart disdain
 That longer he could not refrain from proof
 Of secret practice to deprive me life
 By poison's force, and had bereft me so,
 If mine own servant, hired to this fact, 60
 In time had not bewrayed it unto me.
 When thus I saw the knot of love unknit,
 All honest league and faithful promise broke,
 The law of kind and truth thus rent in twain,

His heart on mischief set, and in his breast
 Black treason hid, then, then I did despair
 That ever time could win him friend to me.
 Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife
 Wrapped under cloak, then saw I deep deceit
 Lurk in his face and death prepared for me. 70
 Even nature moved me then to hold my life
 More dear to me than his, and bade this hand
 (Since by his life my death must need ensue,
 And by his death my life might be preserved)
 To shed his blood, and seek my safety so :
 And wisdom willed me without protract¹
 In speedy win to put the same in use².
 Thus have I told the cause that moved me
 To work my brother's death, and so I yield
 My life, my death, to judgement of your Grace. 80

Gor. O cruel wight, should any cause prevail
 To make thee stain thy hands with brother's blood ?
 But what of thee we will resolve to do
 Shall still remain unknown. Thou, in the mean,
 Shalt from our royal presence banished be
 Until our princely pleasure further shall
 To thee be shown. Depart therefore our sight
 Accursed child. What cruel destiny,
 What froward fate, hath sorted us this chance,
 That even in those where we should comfort find, 90
 Where our delight now in our aged days
 Should rest and be, even these our only grief
 And deepest sorrows to abridge our life,
 Most pining cares and deadly thoughts do grow ?

Porrex departs from the presence-chamber, and Arostatu
 attempts in vain to console the king. Enter Marcella.

¹ delay.

² practise.

Mar. Oh, where is ruth ? or where is pity now ?
 Whither is gentle heart and mercy fled ?
 Are they exiled out of our stony breasts
 Never to make return ? Is all the world
 Drowned in blood and sunk in cruelty ?
 If not in women mercy may be found, 100
 If not (alas) within the mother's breast
 To her own child, to her own flesh and blood,
 If ruth be banished thence, if pity there
 May have no place, if there no gentle heart
 Do live and dwell, where should we seek it then ?

She then narrates that Porrex has been stabbed in his sleep
 by Videna, and continues

But hear his ruthless end.
 The noble prince, pierced with the sudden wound,
 Out of his wretched slumber hast'ly start,
 Whose strength now failing straight he overthrew,
 When in his fall, his eyes even now unclosed 110
 Beheld the Queen and cried to her for help.
 We then, alas ! the ladies which, that time,
 Did there attend, seeing that heinous deed
 And hearing him oft call the wretched name
 Of mother, and to cry to her for aid
 Whose direful hand gave him the mortal wound,
 Pitying, alas (for nought else could we do),
 His ruthless end, ran to the woful bed
 Despoiled straight his breast, and all we might
 Wiped in vain with napkins next at hand 120
 The sudden streams of blood that flushed fast
 Out of the gaping wound. Oh ! what a look,
 Oh ! what a ruthless steadfast eye methought
 He fixed upon my face, which to my death
 Will never part from me, when with a braid¹

¹ Motion of the head.

A deep-set sigh he gave, and therewithal
Clasping his hands, to heaven he cast his sight
And, straight, pale death pressing within his face,
The flying ghost his mortal corpse forsook.

Ah ! noble prince, how oft have I beheld 190
Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed,
Shining in armour bright before the tilt,
And with thy mistress' sleeve tied on thy helm,
And charge thy staff, to please thy lady's eye,
That bowed the head-piece of thy friendly foe.
How oft in arms on horse to bend the mace,
How oft in arms on foot to break the sword,
Which never now these eyes may see again.

ACTUS QUINTUS.

The people rise in rebellion, put Gorboduc and Videna to death, and distract the country with civil war. The play ends with the lament of Eubulus over the destruction of the royal line and the misery that has been brought upon the kingdom.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLANK VERSE

THE plain and straightforward measure of *Gorboduc* is almost wholly wanting in charm: it marches with a firm step but it has no wings to soar. Part of the reason, no doubt, is its lack of imagination; a still larger part is its indifference to vocal melody, to the cunning workmanship of sounds, to the flow of syllables as the notes flow in a tune. And even after its production men grew but slowly to an understanding of the need of musical speech: for twenty years our blank verse remained on the pedestrian level, speaking of weighty matters but caring little for the artistry of its form. The earliest signs of a change may perhaps be detected in George Peele, whose *Arraignement of Paris* (1581) earned for him Nashe's compliment that he was 'a chief craftsman of words'. Yet both in Peele and in his contemporary Thomas Kyd there is more of indication than of achievement: the one possessed a delicate ear, the other a gift of loose and flexible rhythm, but neither had the strength for a sustained flight. For the first supreme and consummate masterpiece of unrhymed versification we must come down to the year 1587 and the appearance of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*.

The general tone of the play is vehement and tempestuous: Mr. Swinburne, in characteristic phrase, describes 'the stormy monotony of Titanic truculence which blusters like a simoom through

the noisy course of its ten fierce acts'. Yet it has its moment of tenderness: the scene in which Tamburlaine watches beside his wife's dying bed, and bows his untameable strength into a cry of love and compassion.¹ And whether the speech be truculent or tender, Marlowe is equally intent on expressing it in gorgeous and glowing phrase. He takes the purest and frankest delight in his own melody: sometimes when he has been inspired with a magical line he turns it over and over and repeats it as though it haunted him. There is a famous example in Part I² where Tamburlaine is apprised of his coming conquest:—

Meander. Your majesty shall shortly have your wish
And ride in triumph through Persepolis.

Tamburlaine. 'And ride in triumph through Persepolis.'
Is it not brave to be a king, Techelles,
Usumcasane and Theridamas?

Is it not passing brave to be a king

'And ride in triumph through Persepolis';

nor less wonderful is the speech over his dying wife³ where the burden:—

To entertain divine Zenocrate

floats and poises and returns like some recurrent melody of Mozart or Schubert, so confident of its welcome that it cannot bear to depart.

He appeals almost as much to the eye. He enjoys the splendour of jewels, the flashing light upon steel, the magnificence of contrasting colours. His imagination is all full of procession and pageant, of rich tapestries and robes of state, of crowns and sceptres and golden chariots. And through all this opulence and display there marches one mighty figure, gigantic, heroic, irresistible, trampling on

¹ Part II, Act ii. sc. 4. See pp. 71-6. Contrast the manner in which he confronts his own death, pp. 79-83.

² Act ii. sc. 5.

³ Part II, Act ii. sc. 4.

power and wealth, taking kings into captivity, carrying his blood-red banner from city to conquered city, and, when his end comes, hurling defiance at the 'envious gods' who have dared to abridge his life.

No doubt the phrase is often extravagant: but to be extravagant is youth's prerogative, and when Marlowe wrote *Tamburlaine* he was a boy of twenty-three. Again, having no applicable standard of taste or restraint, the verse occasionally sinks to mere rant and bombast, but such instances are rare, and the worst of them is obviously intended to express a kind of thrasonical banter.¹ At his best, and his best comes very often, he is a superb artist; he found our blank verse a harpsichord and he left it an orchestra; he enriched it with varied tone and with splendour of movement, with notes that rise and swell and intertwine in full and harmonious complexity.

Not less momentous is the influence which he exercised upon those who came after him. Jonson, it is true, speaks of 'Marlowe's mighty line' as 'fitter for admiration than for parallel'; but two men greater than Jonson did not disdain to learn in his school and to follow in his steps. Shakespeare, though he smiled at the extravagances, touched his own verse with their impulse and inspiration, chastened and purified in the fire of a greater genius, yet glowing with the ore of the mine whence they were dug. Milton took from him many a noble rhythm and cadence, and particularly that love of

¹ In Part II, Act iv. sc. 4, *Tamburlaine* enters in a car drawn by two captive kings, and (it must be confessed) urges them on with the words:—

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia,

What! Can ye draw but twenty miles a day?

Shakespeare, for all his affection to Marlowe, could not resist this couplet, and transferred it to *Ancient Pistol* (*Henry IV*, Part II, Act ii. sc. 4). 'By my troth, Captain,' says Mistress Quickly, 'these are very bitter words.'

filling a stately line with the melody of resounding names. When we read in *Paradise Lost* of

All who since, Baptised or Infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco or Marocco or Trebizond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia,

our thoughts go back to such lines as

And I as many bring from Trebizond,
Chio, Famastro and Amasia,

or

From Soria with seventy thousand strong,
Ta'en from Aleppo, Soldino, Tripoli,
And so on to my city of Damasco.

And here, indeed, the matter can be brought to a simple issue. Take any twenty lines of Marlowe and compare them first with the work of his predecessors, then with that of Shakespeare and Milton: it cannot be doubted to which he bears the closer affinity.

He is said to be deficient in characterization, and it is true that he takes the static, not the dynamic view of character. Each of the *dramatis personae* is painted from the beginning in a few firm strokes, and such as he is at the outset such he remains until the end.¹ Marlowe, in short, has not attained to the conception of a personality developing and modifying under the reaction of circumstance: his dramas are stage epics, as predetermined as the stories of Hector and Aeneas. This is further emphasized by the uniformly heightened and poetic style. In English drama, complains George Whetstone, 'they use one order of speech for all persons',² and under this censure Marlowe may be admitted

¹ Isabella in *Edward II* is an exception; see later, Part III, ch. iv.

² Preface to *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578.

to fall. Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, Celebinus and Calyphas, Theridamas and Orcanes, all speak in the same idiom, in the same cadence; they are differentiated by the parts assigned to them, but not by the phrase in which they find expression. The distinctions of human nature are there, but each is covered with a like rich and brocaded mantle.

There is in *Tamburlaine* little opportunity for humour; in the other dramas there is little display of it. The comic scenes in *Faustus* (possibly retouched by Dekker) appear to our taste somewhat childish and rudimentary; Ithamore in the *Jew of Malta* is no more than a pale monochrome. But over the whole gamut of pity and terror Marlowe's hand never faltered. The death of Edward II¹ is intensely moving and pathetic: the scene in which *Faustus* attends his doom is one of the most overwhelming in all dramatic literature, and it owes almost none of its effect to its use of the supernatural. Were it a prisoner awaiting execution or a victim awaiting the sacrificial knife we should still catch our breath as we listened; we should still echo the despairing outcry 'Tarry, O tarry, horses of the night'; the beating of the clock would still reverberate through our dreams. Too much has been made of Marlowe's inclination to occult or forbidden topics: it is not by these that he stirs us but by the impending sense of sheer and inevitable catastrophe.

Yet, after all, it is to his 'mighty line' that we return: to the surge and thunder of the verse, to the large and elemental imagery that paints with sun and stars, with levin and hurricane. His work was closely contemporary with that of Spenser, and it expresses in forcible and masculine utterance that joy in the beauty of pure sound which breathes more softly and delicately through the cantos of

¹ See later, Part III, ch. iv.

the *Faery Queene*. Britomart, not Zenocrate, is the true mate of Tamburlaine; to his strength her purity is fitly married, and from their union has sprung the long line of romantic feeling and of sweet and sonorous music which have ennobled English poetry to the present day.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593), the son of John Marlowe, a shoemaker, was born at Canterbury, and educated at the King's School and at Benet College (now Corpus Christi), Cambridge. In 1583 he graduated, and for the next four years led a wandering life, of which the details are still matters of conjecture. It is said that he served as a soldier in the Low Countries, and that for part of the time he was an actor in one of the recently erected London theatres, but of this period nothing is known for certain. In 1587 he wrote *Tamburlaine*, which was acted in 1588; then at short intervals appeared *Faustus*, the *Jew of Malta*, and *Edward II*. Among his lesser works may be mentioned some translations from Ovid, written when he was at college, an unfinished tragedy on *Dido*, a paraphrase of Musaeus' *Hero and Leander*, and a few epigrams and songs, of which the famous 'Come live with me and be my love' was first printed in the *Passionate Pilgrim*, and was for a long time ascribed to Shakespeare. He was killed in a tavern brawl at Deptford on June 1, 1593, only twenty-nine years of age.

His tragedies, as might be expected, were received with a good deal of controversy. They were bitterly attacked by Nashe and Greene, but, what is more to the purpose, they were praised by Jonson and loved by Shakespeare. In 1608 an English company, touring through Central Europe, performed *Faustus* and the *Jew of Malta* first at Grätz and then at Vienna. The two plays were immediately successful, were frequently repeated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in this way *Faustus* came into the hands of Goethe, and so had its share of influence on the greatest masterpiece of German dramatic literature.

TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT

PART II

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

TAMBURLAINE, King of Persia.	CALLAPINE, Son of Bajazeth.
CALYPHAS, }	ALMEDA, his Keeper.
AMYRAS, } His sons.	PERDICAS, Servant to Caly-
CELEBINUS, }	phas.
TEHELLES, King of Fez.	GOVERNOR OF BABYLON.
THERIDAMAS, King of Argier.	MAXIMUS.
USUMCASANE, King of Morocco.	CAPTAIN OF BALSERA.
ORCANES, King of Natolia.	His son.
KING OF JERUSALEM.	Physicians.
KING OF TREBIZOND.	Another Captain.
KING OF SORIA.	Lords, Citizens, Soldiers, &c.
KING OF AMASIA.	
GAZELLUS, Viceroy of Byron.	ZENOCRATE, wife of Tambur-
URIBASSA.	laine.
SIGISMUND, King of Hungary.	OLYMPIA, wife of the Captain
FREDERICK, } Lords of Buda	of Balsera.
BALDWIN, } and Bohemia.	Turkish Concubines.

In Part I Tamburlaine, the Scythian shepherd, collects a body of men, first for plunder, then for conquest, and overruns all countries from Samarcand to Morocco. His chief victory is over the Turkish Emperor Bajazeth, who commits suicide under captivity, and whose son Callapine is still a prisoner when Part II begins. At the outset of his fortunes Tamburlaine has captured Zenocrate, daughter of the Soldan of Egypt, whom he takes with him on his campaigns, and whom at the end of Part I he marries with great pomp and circumstance. By the beginning of Part II he has assumed the title of Emperor of Persia, and has bestowed the kingdoms of Fez, Argier, and Morocco upon three of his captains.

ACT I.

Sigismund, King of Hungary, aided by his two lords Frederick and Baldwin, determines to make war upon Tamburlaine, and

for this purpose forms a league with the three Mahommedan princes, Orcanes, Gazellus, and Uribassa. Meanwhile Callapine wearies of his captivity, and bribes his gaoler Almada to let him escape. Tamburlaine prepares to meet his enemies in the field.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Enter CALLAPINE with ALMEDA, his Keeper.

Call. Sweet Almada, pity the ruthful plight
Of Callapine, the son of Bajazeth,
Born to be monarch of the western world,
Yet here detained by cruel Tamburlaine.

Alm. My lord, I pity it, and with all my heart
Wish you release ; but he whose wrath is death,
My sovereign lord, renowned Tamburlaine,
Forbids you farther liberty than this.

Call. Ah, were I now but half so eloquent
To paint in words what I'll perform in deeds, 10
I know thou would'st depart from hence with me.

Alm. Not for all Afric : therefore move me not.

Call. Yet hear me speak, my gentle Almada.

Alm. No speech to that end, by your favour, sir.

Call. By Cairo runs——

Alm. No talk of running, I tell you, sir.

Call. A little farther, gentle Almada.

Alm. Well, sir, what of this ?

Call. By Cairo runs to Alexandria bay
Darote's streams, wherein at anchor lies 20
A Turkish galley of my royal fleet,
Waiting my coming to the river side,
Hoping by some means I shall be released,
Which, when I come aboard, will hoist up sail,
And soon put forth into the Terrene sea,
Where, 'twixt the isles of Cyprus and of Crete,
We quickly may in Turkish seas arrive.

Then shalt thou see a hundred kings and more,
Upon their knees, all bid me welcome home,
Amongst so many crowns of burnished gold, 30
Choose which thou wilt, all are at thy command ;
A thousand galleys, manned with Christian slaves,
I freely give thee, which shall cut the Straits,
And bring armados from the coasts of Spain
Fraughted with gold of rich America ;
The Grecian virgins shall attend on thee,
Skilful in music and in amorous lays,
As fair as was Pygmalion's ivory girl
Or lovely Ið metamorphosèd.

With naked negroes shall thy coach be drawn, 40
And as thou rid'st in triumph through the streets
The pavement underneath thy chariot wheels
With Turkey carpets shall be coverèd,
And cloth of Arras hung about the walls,
Fit objects for thy princely eye to pierce.
A hundred bassoes, clothed in crimson silk,
Shall ride before thee on Barbarian steeds ;
And when thou goest, a golden canopy
Enchased with precious stones, which shine as bright
As that fair veil that covers all the world, 50
When Phoebus, leaping from the hemisphere,
Descendeth downward to the Antipodes,
And more than this—for all I cannot tell.

Alm. How far hence lies the galley, say you ?

Call. Sweet Almeda, scarce half a league from hence.

Alm. But need we not be spied going aboard ?

Call. Betwixt the hollow hanging of a hill,
And crooked bending of a craggy rock,
The sails wrapt up, the mast and tacklings down,
She lies so close that none can find her out. 60

Alm. I like that well : but tell me, my lord, if I should

let you go, would you be as good as your word ? shall I be made a king for my labour !

Call. As I am Callapine the Emperor,
And by the hand of Mahomet I swear
Thou shalt be crowned a king, and be my mate.

Alm. Then here I swear, as I am Almada
Your keeper under Tamburlaine the Great
(For that's the style and title I have yet),
Although he sent a thousand armed men
To intercept this haughty enterprise,
Yet would I venture to conduct your grace,
And die before I brought you back again.

70

Call. Thanks, gentle Almada ; then let us haste,
Lest time be past, and lingering let us both.

Alm. When you will, my lord ; I am ready.

Call. Even straight ; and farewell, cursed Tamburlaine.
Now go I to revenge my father's death. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT I. SCENE III.

*Enter TAMBURLAINE, ZENOCRATE, and their three Sons,
CALYPHAS, AMYRAS, and CELEBINUS, with drums and
trumpets.*

Tamb. Now, bright Zenocrate, the world's fair eye,
Whose beams illuminate the lamps of Heaven,
Whose cheerful looks do clear the cloudy air,
And clothe it in a crystal livery ;
Now rest thee here on fair Larissa plains,
Where Egypt and the Turkish empire part
Between thy sons, that shall be emperors,
And every one commander of a world.

Zeno. Sweet Tamburlaine, when wilt thou leave these
arms,
And save thy sacred person free from scathe,
And dangerous chances of the wrathful war ?

10

Tamb. When Heaven shall cease to move on both the
poles,
And when the ground, whereon my soldiers march,
Shall rise aloft and touch the hornèd moon,
And not before, my sweet Zenocrate.
Sit up, and rest thee like a lovely queen ;
So, now she sits in pomp and majesty,
When these, my sons, more precious in mine eyes,
Than all the wealthy kingdoms I subdued,
Placed by her side, look on their mother's face : 20
But yet methinks their looks are amorous,
Not martial as the sons of Tamburlaine :
Water and air, being symbolized in one,
Argue their want of courage and of wit ;
Their hair as white as milk and soft as down
(Which should be like the quills of porcupines
As black as jet and hard as iron or steel),
Bewrays they are too dainty for the wars ;
Their fingers made to quaver on a lute,
Their arms to hang about a lady's neck, 30
Their legs to dance and caper in the air,
Would make me think them bastards not my sons,
But that I know they issued from thy womb
That never looked on man but Tamburlaine.

Zeno. My gracious lord, they have their mother's looks,
But when they list their conquering father's heart.
This lovely boy, the youngest of the three,
Not long ago bestrid a Scythian steed,
Trotting the ring, and tilting at a glove,
Which when he tainted with his slender rod, 40
He reined him straight and made him so curvet,
As I cried out for fear he should have fallen.

Tamb. Well done, my boy, thou shalt have shield and
lance,

Armour of proof, horse, helm, and curtle-axe,
 And I will teach thee how to charge thy foe,
 And harmless run among the deadly pikes.
 If thou wilt love the wars and follow me,
 Thou shalt be made a king and reign with me,
 Keeping in iron cages emperors.

If thou exceed thy elder brothers' worth
 And shine in complete virtue more than they,
 Thou shalt be king before them, and thy seed
 Shall issue crowned from their mother's womb.

50

Cal. Yes, father : you shall see me, if I live,
 Have under me as many kings as you,
 And march with such a multitude of men,
 As all the world shall tremble at their view.

Tamb. These words assure me, boy, thou art my son.
 When I am old and cannot manage arms,
 Be thou the scourge and terror of the world.

60

Amy. Why may not I, my lord, as well as he,
 Be termed the scourge and terror of the world ?

Tamb. Be all a scourge and terror to the world,
 Or else you are not sons of Tamburlaine.

Cal. But while my brothers follow arms, my lord,
 Let me accompany my gracious mother ;
 They are enough to conquer all the world,
 And you have won enough for me to keep.

Tamb. Bastardly boy, sprung from some coward's loins,
 And not the issue of great Tamburlaine ;
 Of all the provinces I have subdued,
 Thou shalt not have a foot unless thou bear
 A mind courageous and invincible :
 For he shall wear the crown of Persia
 Whose head hath deepest scars, whose breast most
 wounds,
 Which being wroth sends lightning from his eyes,

70

And in the furrows of his frowning brows
Harbours revenge, war, death, and cruelty ;
For in a field, whose superficies
Is covered with a liquid purple veil 80
And sprinkled with the brains of slaughtered men,
My royal chair of state shall be advanced ;
And he that means to place himself therein,
Must armed wade up to the chin in blood.

Zeno. My lord, such speeches to our princely sons
Dismay their minds before they come to prove
The wounding troubles angry war affords.

Cel. No, madam, these are speeches fit for us,
For if his chair were in a sea of blood
I would prepare a ship and sail to it, 90
Ere I would lose the title of a king.

Amy. And I would strive to swim through pools of
blood,
Or make a bridge of murdered carcases,
Whose arches should be framed with bones of Turks,
Ere I would lose the title of a king.

Tamb. Well, lovely boys, ye shall be emperors both,
Stretching your conquering arms from East to West ;
And, sirrah, if you mean to wear a crown,
When we shall meet the Turkish deputy
And all his viceroys, snatch it from his head, 100
And cleave his pericranium with thy sword.

Cal. If any man will hold him, I will strike
And cleave him to the channel with my sword.

Tamb. Hold him, and cleave him too, or I'll cleave
thee,
For we will march against them presently.
Theridamas, Techelles, and Casane
Promised to meet me on Larissa plains
With hosts apiece against this Turkish crew ;

For I have sworn by sacred Mahomet
 To make it parcel of my empery ; 110
 The trumpets sound, Zenocrate ; they come.

Enter THERIDAMAS and his Train, with drums and trumpets.

Tamb. Welcome, Theridamas, King of Argier.

Ther. My lord, the great and mighty Tamburlaine,—
 Arch-monarch of the world, I offer here
 My crown, myself, and all the power I have,
 In all affection at thy kingly feet.

Tamb. Thanks, good Theridamas.

Ther. Under my colours march ten thousand Greeks ;
 And of Argier's and Afric's frontier towns 120
 Twice twenty thousand valiant men-at-arms,
 All which have sworn to sack Natolia.
 Five hundred brigandines are under sail,
 Meet for your service on the sea, my lord,
 That launching from Argier to Tripoli,
 Will quickly ride before Natolia,
 And batter down the castles on the shore.

Tamb. Well said, Argier ; receive thy crown again.

Enter TECHELLES and USUMCASANE together.

Tamb. Kings of Morocco and of Fez, welcome.

Usum. Magnificent and peerless Tamburlaine ! 130
 I and my neighbour King of Fez have brought
 To aid thee in this Turkish expedition,
 A hundred thousand expert soldiers :
 From Azamor to Tunis near the sea
 Is Barbary unpeopled for thy sake,
 And all the men in armour under me,
 Which with my crown I gladly offer thee.

Tamb. Thanks, King of Morocco, take your crown
 again.

Tech. And, mighty Tamburlaine, our earthly god,
Whose looks make this inferior world to quake,
I here present thee with the crown of Fez, 140
And with an host of Moors trained to the war,
Whose coal-black faces make their foes retire,
And quake for fear, as if infernal Jove
Meaning to aid thee in these Turkish arms,
Should pierce the black circumference of hell
With ugly Furies bearing fiery flags,
And millions of his strong tormenting spirits.
From strong Tesella unto Biledull
All Barbary is unpeopled for thy sake.

Tamb. Thanks, King of Fez ; take here thy crown again.
Your presence, loving friends, and fellow kings, 151
Makes me to surfeit in conceiving joy.
If all the crystal gates of Jove's high court
Were opened wide, and I might enter in
To see the state and majesty of Heaven,
It could not more delight me than your sight.
Now will we banquet on these plains awhile,
And after march to Turkey with our camp,
In number more than are the drops that fall,
When Boreas rents a thousand swelling clouds ; 160
And proud Orcanes of Natolia
With all his viceroys shall be so afraid,
That though the stones, as at Deucalion's flood,
Were turned to men, he should be overcome.
Such lavish will I make of Turkish blood,
That Jove shall send his winged messenger
To bid me sheathe my sword and leave the field ;
The sun unable to sustain the sight,
Shall hide his head in Thetis' watery lap,
And leave his steeds to fair Bötotes' charge ; 170
For half the world shall perish in this fight.

But now, my friends, let me examine ye ;
How have ye spent your absent time from me ?

Usm. My lord, our men of Barbary have marched
Four hundred miles with armour on their backs,
And lain in leaguer fifteen months and more ;
For, since we left you at the Soldan's court,
We have subdued the southern Guallatia,
And all the land unto the coast of Spain ;
We kept the narrow Strait of Jubaltèr, 180
And made Canaria call us kings and lords ;
Yet never did they recreate themselves,
Or cease one day from war and hot alarms,
And therefore let them rest awhile, my lord.

Tamb. They shall, Casane, and 'tis time i' faith.

Tech. And I have marched along the river Nile
To Machda, where the mighty Christian priest,
Called John the Great, sits in a milk-white robe,
Whose triple mitre I did take by force,
And made him swear obedience to my crown ; 190
From thence unto Cazates did I march,
Where Amazonians met me in the field,
With whom, being women, I vouchsafed a league,
And with my power did march to Zanzibar,
The eastern part of Afric, where I viewed
The Ethiopian sea, rivers and lakes,
But neither man nor child in all the land ;
Therefore I took my course to Manico,
Where unresisted, I removed my camp ;
And by the coast of Byather, at last 200
I came to Cubar, where the negroes dwell,
And conquering that, made haste to Nubia.
There, having sacked Borno the kingly seat,
I took the king and led him bound in chains
Unto Damasco, where I stayed before.

Tamb. Well done, Techelles. What saith Theridamas?

Ther. I left the confines and bounds of Afric
And thence I made a voyage into Europe,
Where by the river Tyras I subdued
Stoka, Podolia, and Codemia ; 210
Thence crossed the sea and came to Oblia
And Nigra Sylva, where the devils dance,
Which in despite of them I set on fire.
From thence I crossed the gulf called by the name
Mare Majore of the inhabitants.
Yet shall my soldiers make no period,
Until Natolia kneel before your feet.

Tamb. Then will we triumph, banquet and carouse ;
Cooks shall have pensions to provide us cates,
And glut us with the dainties of the world ; 220
Lachryma Christi and Calabrian wines
Shall common soldiers drink in quaffing bowls,
Aye, liquid gold (when we have conquered him)
Mingled with coral and with orient pearl.
Come, let us banquet and carouse the whiles. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

Sigismund, Frederick, and Baldwin conspire to break troth and march upon their Mahommedan allies. A battle ensues in which Sigismund is slain and the Christian army put to flight. Tamburlaine, setting out to meet Orcanes, is delayed by the illness of Zenocrate.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

ZENOCRATE is discovered lying in her bed of state, with TAMBURLAINE sitting by her. About her bed are three PHYSICIANS tempering potions. Around are THERIDAMAS, TECHELLES, USUMCASANE, and her three Sons.

Tamb. Black is the beauty of the brightest day ;
The golden ball of Heaven's eternal fire,

That danced with glory on the silver waves,
 Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams ;
 And all with faintness, and for foul disgrace,
 He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,
 Ready to darken earth with endless night.
 Zenocrate, that gave him light and life,
 Whose eyes shot fire from their ivory bowers
 And tempered every soul with lively heat, 10
 Now by the malice of the angry skies,
 Whose jealousy admits no second mate,
 Draws in the comfort of her latest breath,
 All dazzled with the hellish mists of death.
 Now walk the angels on the walls of Heaven,
 As sentinels to warn the immortal souls
 To entertain divine Zenocrate.
 Apollo, Cynthia, and the ceaseless lamps
 That gently looked upon this loathsome earth,
 Shine downward now no more, but deck the Heavens,
 To entertain divine Zenocrate. 21
 The crystal springs, whose taste illuminates
 Refined eyes with an eternal sight,
 Like tried silver, run through Paradise,
 To entertain divine Zenocrate.
 The cherubins and holy seraphins,
 That sing and play before the King of kings,
 Use all their voices and their instruments
 To entertain divine Zenocrate.
 And in this sweet and curious harmony, 30
 The God that tunes this music to our souls,
 Holds out his hand in highest majesty
 To entertain divine Zenocrate.
 Then let some holy trance convey my thoughts
 Up to the palace of th' empyreal Heaven,
 That this my life may be as short to me

As are the days of sweet Zenocrate.—

Physicians, will no physic do her good ?

Phys. My lord, your majesty shall soon perceive :

And if she pass this fit, the worst is past. 40

Tamb. Tell me, how fares my fair Zenocrate.

Zeno. I fare, my lord, as other empresses,
That, when this frail and transitory flesh
Hath sucked the measure of that vital air
That feeds the body with his dated health,
Wade with enforced and necessary change.

Tamb. May never such a change transform my love,
In whose sweet being I repose my life,
Whose heavenly presence, beautified with health,
Gives light to Phoebus and the fixed stars ! 50
Whose absence makes the sun and moon as dark
As when, opposed in one diameter,
Their spheres are mounted on the serpent's head,
Or else descended to his winding train.
Live still, my love, and so conserve my life,
Or, dying, be the author of my death !

Zeno. Live still, my lord ! Oh, let my sovereign live,
And sooner let the fiery element
Dissolve and make your kingdom in the sky,
Than this base earth should shroud your majesty : 60
For should I but suspect your death by mine,
The comfort of my future happiness,
And hope to meet your highness in the Heavens,
Turned to despair, would break my wretched breast,
And fury would confound my present rest.
But let me die, my love ; yet let me die ;
With love and patience let your true love die !
Your grief and fury hurts my second life.—
Yet let me kiss my lord before I die,
And let me die with kissing of my lord. 70

But since my life is lengthened yet a while,
 Let me take leave of these my loving sons,
 And of my lords, whose true nobility
 Have merited my latest memory.
 Sweet sons, farewell ! In death resemble me,
 And in your lives your father's excellence.
 Some music, and my fit will cease, my lord.

[*They call for music.*

Tamb. Proud fury, and intolerable fit,
 That dares torment the body of my love,
 And scourge the scourge of the immortal God : 80
 Now are those spheres, where Cupid used to sit,
 Wounding the world with wonder and with love,
 Sadly supplied with pale and ghastly death,
 Whose darts do pierce the centre of my soul.
 Her sacred beauty hath enchanted Heaven ;
 And had she lived before the siege of Troy,
 Helen (whose beauty summoned Greece to arms,
 And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos)
 Had not been named in Homer's Iliad ;
 Her name had been in every line he wrote. 90
 Or had those wanton poets, for whose birth
 Old Rome was proud, but gazed a while on her,
 Nor Lesbia nor Corinna had been named ;
 Zenocrate had been the argument
 Of every epigram or elegy.

[*The music sounds.—ZENOCRATE dies.*

What ! is she dead ? Techelles, draw thy sword
 And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain,
 And we descend into the infernal vaults,
 To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair,
 And throw them in the triple moat of hell, 100
 For taking hence my fair Zenocrate.
 Casane and Theridamas, to arms !

Raise cavalieros higher than the clouds,
And with the cannon break the frame of Heaven ;
Batter the shining palace of the sun,
And shiver all the starry firmament,
For amorous Jove hath snatched my love from hence,
Meaning to make her stately queen of Heaven.

What God soever holds thee in his arms,
Giving thee nectar and ambrosia, 110
Behold me here, divine Zenocrate,
Raving, impatient, desperate, and mad,
Breaking my steeled lance, with which I burst
The rusty beams of Janus' temple-doors,
Letting out Death and tyrannizing War,
To march with me under this bloody flag !
And if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great,
Come down from Heaven, and live with me again !

Ther. Ah, good my lord, be patient ; she is dead,
And all this raging cannot make her live. 120
If words might serve, our voice hath rent the air ;
If tears, our eyes have watered all the earth ;
If grief, our murdered hearts have strained forth blood ;
Nothing prevails, for she is dead, my lord.

Tamb. 'For she is dead !' Thy words do pierce my
soul !

Ah, sweet Theridamas ! say so no more ;
Though she be dead, yet let me think she lives,
And feed my mind that dies for want of her.
Where'er her soul be, thou [*To the body*] shalt stay with
me,

Embalmed with cassia, ambergris, and myrrh, 130
Not lapt in lead, but in a sheet of gold,
And till I die thou shalt not be interred.
Then in as rich a tomb as Mausolus
We both will rest and have one epitaph

Writ in as many several languages
 As I have conquered kingdoms with my sword.
 This cursèd town will I consume with fire,
 Because this place bereaved me of my love :
 The houses, burnt, will look as if they mourned ;
 And here will I set up her statua, 140
 And march about it with my mourning camp
 Drooping and pining for Zenocrate. [*The scene closes.*]

ACT III.

Callapine, having effected his escape, returns to his own people and is crowned Emperor of Turkey by Orcanes and the allied kings of Jerusalem, Trebizond, and Soria. Techelles and Theridamas invade Soria, take its capital Balsera by storm, and capture Olympia. Tamburlaine himself marches against Orcanes and Callapine. Act IV begins on the battlefield.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Alarums within.—AMYRAS and CELEBINUS *issue from the tent where CALYPHAS sits asleep.*

Amy. Now in their glories shine the golden crowns
 Of these proud Turks, much like so many suns
 That half dismay the majesty of Heaven.
 Now, brother, follow we our father's sword,
 That flies with fury swifter than our thoughts,
 And cuts down armies with his conquering wings.

Cel. Call forth our lazy brother from the tent,
 For if my father miss him in the field,
 Wrath, kindled in the furnace of his breast,
 Will send a deadly lightning to his heart. 10

Amy. Brother, ho ! what given so much to sleep !
 You cannot leave it, when our enemies' drums
 And rattling cannons thunder in our ears
 Our proper ruin and our father's foil ?

Cal. Away, ye fools ! my father needs not me,

Nor you in faith, but that you will be thought
More childish-valorous than manly-wise.
If half our camp should sit and sleep with me,
My father were enough to scare the foe.
You do dishonour to his majesty,
To think our helps will do him any good.

20

Amy. What, dar'st thou then be absent from the field,
Knowing my father hates thy cowardice,
And oft hath warned thee to be still in field,
When he himself amidst the thickest troops
Beats down our foes, to flesh our taintless swords?

Cal. I know, sir, what it is to kill a man ;
It works remorse of conscience in me ;
I take no pleasure to be murderous,
Nor care for blood when wine will quench my thirst.

30

Cel. O cowardly boy ! Fie ! for shame come forth !
Thou dost dishonour manhood and thy house.

Cal. Go, go, tall stripling, fight you for us both,
And take my other toward brother here,
For person like to prove a second Mars.
'Twill please my mind as well to hear you both
Have won a heap of honour in the field
And left your slender carcasses behind,
As if I lay with you for company.

Amy. You will not go then ?

40

Cal. You say true.

Amy. Were all the lofty mounts of Zona Mundi
That fill the midst of farthest Tartary
Turned into pearl and proffered for my stay,
I would not bide the fury of my father,
When, made a victor in these haughty arms,
He comes and finds his sons have had no shares
In all the honours he proposed for us.

Cal. Take you ~~the~~ honour, I will take my ease ;

My wisdom shall excuse my cowardice. 50
 I go into the field before I need !

[*Alarums.*—*AMYRAS and CELEBINUS run out.*

The bullets fly at random where they list ;
 And should I go and kill a thousand men,
 I were as soon rewarded with a shot,
 And sooner far than he that never fights :
 And should I go and do no harm nor good,
 I might have harm which all the good I have,
 Joined with my father's crown, would never cure.
 I'll to cards.

Tamburlaine returns triumphant, and in a fit of rage stabs his laggard son Calyphas for skulking from the battle. Having divided the spoil, and compelled the kings of Jerusalem and Soria to draw his chariot, he announces to Techelles that his next expedition is to be against Babylon.

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

Tech. Let us not be idle then, my lord,
 But presently be prest to conquer it.

Tamb. We will, Techelles. Forward then, ye jades.
 Now crouch, ye kings of greatest Asia,
 And tremble when ye hear this scourge will come
 That whips down cities and controlleth crowns,
 Adding their wealth and treasure to my store.
 The Euxine sea, north to Natolia ;
 The Terrene, west ; the Caspian, north-north-east ;
 And on the south, Sinus Arabicus ; 10
 Shall all be loaden with the martial spoils
 We will convey with us to Persia.
 Then shall my native city, Samarcanda,
 And crystal waves of fresh Jaertis' stream,
 The pride and beauty of her princely seat,
 Be famous through the furthest continents,

For there my palace-royal shall be placed,
Whose shining turrets shall dismay the Heavens,
And cast the fame of Ilion's tower to hell.
Thorough the streets with troops of conquered kings, 20
I'll ride in golden armour like the sun ;
And in my helm a triple plume shall spring,
Spangled with diamonds, dancing in the air,
To note me emperor of the threefold world,
Like to an almond tree y-mounted high
Upon the lofty and celestial mount
Of ever-green Selinus quaintly decked
With blooms more white than Erycina's brows,
Whose tender blossoms tremble every one,
At every little breath through Heaven is blown. 30
Then in my coach, like Saturn's royal son
Mounted, his shining chariot gilt with fire,
And drawn with princely eagles through the path
Paved with bright crystal and enchased with stars,
When all the gods stand gazing at his pomp,
So will I ride through Samarcanda streets,
Until my soul, dissevered from this flesh,
Shall mount the milk-white way, and meet him there.
To Babylon, my lords ; to Babylon ! [Exeunt.

ACT V.

Tamburlaine sacks Babylon, hangs the Governor on the walls, and massacres the inhabitants. He then marches to meet Callapine, when he is suddenly struck down by sickness.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Enter TAMBURLAINE drawn in his chariot by the captive Kings as before ; AMYRAS, CELEBINUS, and Physicians.

Tamb. What daring god torments my body thus,
And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine ?

Shall sickness prove me now to be a man,
 That have been termed the terror of the world ?
 Techelles and the rest, come, take your swords,
 And threaten him whose hand afflicts my soul.
 Come, let us march against the powers of Heaven,
 And set black streamers in the firmament,
 To signify the slaughter of the gods.
 Ah, friends, what shall I do ? I cannot stand. 10
 Come carry me to war against the gods
 That thus envy the health of Tamburlaine.

Ther. Ah, good my lord, leave these impatient words,
 Which add much danger to your malady.

Tamb. Why, shall I sit and languish in this pain ?
 No, strike the drums, and in revenge of this,
 Come, let us charge our spears and pierce his breast,
 Whose shoulders bear the axis of the world,
 That, if I perish, Heaven and earth may fade.
 Theridamas, haste to the court of Jove, 20
 Will him to send Apollo hither straight,
 To cure me, or I'll fetch him down myself.

Tech. Sit still, my gracious lord ; this grief will cease,
 And cannot last, it is so violent.

Tamb. Not last, Techelles ?—No ! for I shall die.
 See, where my slave, the ugly monster, Death,
 Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear,
 Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart,
 Who flies away at every glance I give,
 And, when I look away, comes stealing on. 30
 Villain, away, and hie thee to the field !
 I and mine army come to load thy back
 With souls of thousand mangled carcasses.
 Look, where he goes ; but see, he comes again,
 Because I stay : Techelles, let us march
 And weary Death with bearing souls to hell.

Enter Messenger.

Mes. My lord, young Callapine, that lately fled from your majesty, hath now gathered a fresh army, and hearing your absence in the field, offers to set upon us presently. 40

Tamb. See, my physicians now, how Jove hath sent A present medicine to recure my pain.
My looks shall make them fly, and might I follow,
There should not one of all the villain's power
Live to give offer of another fight.

Usur. I joy, my lord, your highness is so strong,
That can endure so well your royal presence,
Which only will dismay the enemy.

Tamb. I know it will, Casane. Draw, you slaves ;
In spite of death, I will go show my face. 50

[*Alarums.—Exit TAMBURLAINE and the rest, with the exception of the Physicians. They all presently re-enter.*

Tamb. Thus are the villain cowards fled for fear,
Like summer's vapours vanished by the sun ;
And could I but awhile pursue the field,
That Callapine should be my slave again.
But I perceive my martial strength is spent.
In vain I strive and rail against those powers,
That mean to invest me in a higher throne,
As much too high for this disdainful earth.
Give me a map ; then let me see how much
Is left for me to conquer all the world, 60
That these, my boys, may finish all my wants.

[*One brings a map.*

Here I began to march towards Persia,
Along Armenia and the Caspian Sea,
And thence unto Bithynia, where I took
The Turk and his great Empress prisoners.

Thence marched I into Egypt and Arabia,
 And here, not far from Alexandria,
 Whereas the Terrene and the Red Sea meet,
 Being distant less than full a hundred leagues,
 I meant to cut a channel to them both, 70
 That men might quickly sail to India.
 From thence to Nubia near Borno lake,
 And so along the Aethiopian sea,
 Cutting the Tropic line of Capricorn,
 I conquered all as far as Zanzibar.
 Then, by the northern part of Africa,
 I came at last to Graecia, and from thence
 To Asia, where I stay against my will ;
 Which is from Scythia, where I first began,
 Backwards and forwards near five thousand leagues. 80
 Look here, my boys ; see what a world of ground
 Lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line,
 Unto the rising of this earthly globe ;
 Whereas the sun, declining from our sight,
 Begins the day with our Antipodes !
 And shall I die, and this unconquered ?
 Lo, here, my sons, are all the golden mines,
 Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
 More worth than Asia and the world beside ;
 And from the Antarctic Pole eastward behold 90
 As much more land, which never was descried,
 Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright
 As all the lamps that beautify the sky !
 And shall I die, and this unconquered ?
 Here, lovely boys ; what death forbids my life,
 That let your lives command in spite of death.

Amy. Alas, my lord, how should our bleeding hearts,
 Wounded and broken with your highness' grief,
 Retain a thought of joy or spark of life ?

Your soul gives essence to our wretched subjects, 100
Whose matter is incorporate in your flesh.

Cel. Your pains do pierce our souls ; no hope survives
For by your life we entertain our lives.

Tamb. But, sons, this subject, not of force enough
To hold the fiery spirit it contains,
Must part, imparting his impressions
By equal portions into both your breasts ;
My flesh, divided in your precious shapes,
Shall still retain my spirit, though I die,
And live in all your seeds immortally. 110
Then now remove me, that I may resign
My place and proper title to my son.
First, take my scourge and my imperial crown,
And mount my royal chariot of estate,
That I may see thee crowned before I die.
Help me, my lords, to make my last remove.

[They lift him from the chariot.]

Ther. A woful change, my lord, that daunts our
thoughts,
More than the ruin of our proper souls !

Tamb. Sit up, my son, and let me see how well
Thou wilt become thy father's majesty. 120

Amy. With what a flinty bosom should I joy
The breath of life and burthen of my soul,
If not resolved into resolved pains,
My body's mortified lineaments
Should exercise the motions of my heart,
Pierced with the joy of any dignity !
O father ! if the unrelenting ears
Of death and hell be shut against my prayers,
And that the spiteful influence of Heaven,
Deny my soul fruition of her joy ; 130
How should I step, or stir my hateful feet

Against the inward powers of my heart,
 Leading a life that only strives to die,
 And plead in vain unpleasing sovereignty ?

Tamb. Let not thy love exceed thine honour, son,
 Nor bar thy mind that magnanimity
 That nobly must admit necessity.
 Sit up, my boy, and with those silken reins
 Bridle the steeled stomachs of those jades.

Ther. My lord, you must obey his majesty, 140
 Since fate commands and proud necessity.

Amy. Heavens witness me with what a broken heart
 And damned spirit I ascend this seat,
 And send my soul, before my father die,
 His anguish and his burning agony !

[*They crown AMYRAS.*

Tamb. Now fetch the hearse of fair Zenocrate ;
 Let it be placed by this my fatal chair,
 And serve as parcel of my funeral.

Usum. Then feels your majesty no sovereign ease,
 Nor may our hearts, all drowned in tears of blood, 150
 Joy any hope of your recovery ?

Tamb. Casane, no ; the monarch of the earth,
 And eyeless monster that torments my soul,
 Cannot behold the tears ye shed for me,
 And therefore still augments his cruelty.

Tech. Then let some God oppose his holy power
 Against the wrath and tyranny of Death,
 That his tear-thirsty and unquenched hate
 May be upon himself reverberate !

[*They bring in the hearse of ZENOGRATE.*

Tamb. Now eyes enjoy your latest benefit, 160
 And when my soul hath virtue of your sight,
 Pierce through the coffin and the sheet of gold,
 And glut your longings with a heaven of joy.

So reign, my son ; scourge and control those slaves,
Guiding thy chariot with thy father's hand.
As precious is the charge thou undertakest
As that which Clymene's brain-sick son did guide,
When wandering Phoebe's ivory cheeks were scorched,
And all the earth, like Aetna, breathing fire ;
Be warned by him, then ; learn with awful eye 170
To sway a throne as dangerous as his ;
For if thy body thrive not full of thoughts
As pure and fiery as Phyteus' beams,
The nature of these proud rebelling jades
Will take occasion by the slenderest hair,
And draw thee piecemeal like Hippolytus,
Through rocks more steep and sharp than Caspian cliffs.
The nature of thy chariot will not bear
A guide of baser temper than myself,
More than Heaven's coach the pride of Phaeton. 180
Farewell, my boys ; my dearest friends farewell !
My body feels, my soul doth weep to see
Your sweet desires deprived my company,
For Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die.

[*He dies.*

Amy. Meet Heaven and Earth, and here let all things
end,

For Earth hath spent the pride of all her fruit,
And Heaven consumed his choicest living fire.
Let Earth and Heaven his timeless death deplore,
For both their worths will equal him no more.

CHAPTER V

LEARNED TRAGEDY

WE have seen that, from 1560 onwards, there arose in England a fashion of writing tragedies upon Classical subjects, now derived through Seneca or other intermediaries from the Greek drama, now founded directly on some episode or event in Ancient History. Towards the turn of the century this wave receded before the gradual progress and advance of Romantic feeling, and though in 1601 Shakespeare brought it to a flood-tide with *Julius Caesar*, it spread but narrowly among his contemporaries and successors. Yet it is from the greatest of his contemporaries that we may take the most salient example of 'Classical' tragedy which is to be found outside his own work. Jonson, indeed, was well fitted to set a Roman story upon the stage. He had a considerable knowledge of Latin literature, he had a considerable sense of proportion and stagecraft; it is not fantastic to trace in his actual career something of sympathy and kinship with the Roman spirit. Solid and self-reliant he planted himself four-square in the polity of letters, a fearless critic he could admire 'on this side idolatry'; if he was stern to his enemies he was in equal measure loyal to his friends. In one of his conversations with Drummond¹ he narrates how he collaborated with Marston and Chapman over a play; how a passage,

¹ *Conversations*, xiii. The play was *Eastward Ho*, and appeared in 1606.

in which he had no hand, gave umbrage to the Court and led to the arrest of his two comrades; how he voluntarily shared their imprisonment; and how his old mother, the minister's widow who had married the bricklayer, hearing that he was like to have his nose slit for the offence, compounded a 'lustie strong poison' for him (and for herself) that he might so escape from bringing public shame upon the family. It is more like an anecdote from the reign of Nero than from that of James I.

Sejanus is closely modelled on the *Annals* of Tacitus. Some of the speeches are paraphrases, many of the passages are almost verbatim translations, the plot is sometimes enlarged, sometimes concentrated from the historical record. To compare it with *Julius Caesar*, which preceded it by two years, is to recall the famous wit-combats between Jonson and Shakespeare, the one 'like a Spanish galleon', towering deck above deck and weighted over the load-line with erudition, the other such an English vessel as helped to defeat the Armada, outsailing its tall antagonist by sheer genius of seamanship. Yet, if the galleon were slow to tack, it was irresistible on a straight course. There is, for instance, nothing in Jonson's play so brilliant as the flash of dialogue, 'Did Cicero speak?' 'Aye, he spoke Greek,' which gives the whole character of Cicero in four words; but there is real insight in the line which sums up *Sejanus*' opinion of his most rhetorical opponent:—

And there's Arruntius, too, he only talks.

Up to that point we have regarded Arruntius as an embodiment of republican fervour; in a moment we see that this new estimate of him is right, and from thenceforward he sinks to the level of mere humorous commentary.

In the character of Tiberius, Jonson unquestion-

ably improves on his original. It is one of the commonplaces of history that Tacitus attempted the portrait of a vindictive and bloodthirsty despot, and succeeded in depicting a suspicious, hesitating, and not unkindly pedant anxious for justice, anxious for the welfare of Rome, and especially anxious to avoid all semblance of responsibility. He has given us two Emperors, one in his narrative and the other in his comments; Jonson cuts through the incongruity and presents us with a single coherent picture which is probably much nearer to life. Sejanus, too, is an admirable study, and the irony of his fate, skilfully prefaced by an alternation of good news and evil omens, brings the whole play to a forcible and dramatic climax.

As is the content so is the form. We can see Jonson himself in these sturdy forthright verses which, though they have neither the glamour of Shakespeare nor the resonant voice of Marlowe, maintain their tenour with a strong and masculine eloquence. There is something of the Roman *gravitas* in his speech; it is weighty and senatorial, seldom impassioned, but almost invariably wise and illuminating. It is, moreover, of remarkably even workmanship: if there are few jewels, yet the metal is pure and the curve shapely. We are told that Shakespeare, who took part in the first performance, added 'a good share' to the acting version, and that Jonson, when he published the play, refused to accept gifts even at the hand of the gods. 'I have rather chosen,' he says, 'to put weaker, and, no doubt, less pleasing, of mine own, than defraud so happy a genius of his right by my loathed usurpation.'¹ In the whole history of our literature there is no figure more consistent.

¹ Preface to *Sejanus*. Jonson does not mention the name of his collaborator, but it was almost certainly Shakespeare.

BEN JONSON (1573-1637) came of a Cumberland family. His father lost his estate during the religious persecutions of Queen Mary's reign, took Holy Orders, and died, apparently in London, a month before the boy was born. His mother, left in extreme poverty, married a bricklayer of 'Hart's-horn lane, near Charing Cross', with whose assistance she brought up her son as well as her meagre circumstances would allow. He was educated at Westminster, perhaps by the charity of William Camden, and proceeded from thence to Cambridge; but for want of money was obliged to leave the University after a residence of a few weeks. On returning to London he was taken into his step-father's trade, but finding this intolerable he enlisted in the English forces which were then fighting in the Low Countries under Maurice of Nassau. About 1595 he came back to England, and joined one of Henslowe's companies, probably that which was playing at the Paris Garden theatre. In 1598 *Every Man in his Humour* was, at the instance of Shakespeare, accepted for representation, and played by 'The Lord Chamberlain's Servants'. *Every Man out of his Humour* followed, probably next year; in 1600 came *Cynthia's Revels* and the *Poetaster*, which attacked Marston and Dekker, and provoked their retort in *Satiromastix*; in 1608 came *Sejanus*, which (possibly as a result of the controversy) was driven from the theatre. On the accession of James I Jonson wrote a masque called the *Satyr*, which was so successful that he received many commissions for work of a like character; in 1604 the *Penates* was played before the king at Highgate, and in 1605 the *Masque of Blackness* was given at the Court on Twelfth Night, the queen taking part in the performance. He composed in all between thirty and forty of these entertainments, the most notable of which are the *Masque of Queens* (1609), called by Mr. Swinburne 'one of the most splendid trophies of English literature'; the *Golden Age Restored* (1615), in which Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, and Spenser are introduced as characters; and the *Sad Shepherd*, an exquisite fragment which was left unfinished at his death. Of his plays *Volpone* appeared in 1605, the *Silent Woman* in 1609, the *Alchemist* in 1610, *Catiline*, which like *Sejanus* was ill-received, in 1611, and *Bartholomew Fair* in 1614. After this, except for one slight and unimportant comedy, Jonson withdrew from the public

stage till 1625, when he returned with the *Staple of News*, and followed it with the *New Inn* (1629), the *Magnetic Lady* (1633), and the *Tale of a Tub* (1633). In these later plays, though the details are as carefully elaborated, the hand has lost somewhat of its cunning. Besides his dramatic works, he wrote many miscellaneous poems and prose essays, which were collected in the volumes entitled *The Forest Underwoods* and *Timber or Discoveries*.

His life was a turbulent counterchange of extreme fortunes. He was born poor and died poor, yet for some years he stood high in Court favour, and he held the office of Poet Laureate. Thrice he was imprisoned, once for duelling and twice for suspected libel; throughout his career there were few intervals free from dispute or conflict. But he fought boldly and conquered generously; he struck no coward's blow, he took no unfair advantage; he maintained his weapons unbroken, and left behind him a name which even his antagonists held in reverence.

SEJANUS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

TIBERIUS.
 DRUSUS senior.
 NERO.
 DRUSUS junior.
 CALIGULA.
 ARRUNTIUS.
 SILIUS.
 SABINUS.
 LEPIDUS.
 CORDUS.
 GALLUS.
 REGULUS.
 TERENTIUS.
 LACO.
 EUDEMUS.
 RUFUS.
 SEJANUS.
 LATIARIS.
 VARRO.
 MACRO.
 COTTA.
 AFER.

HATERIUS.
 SANQUINIUS.
 POMPONIUS.
 POSTHUMUS
 TRIO.
 MINUTIUS.
 SATRIUS.
 NATTA.
 OPSIUS.
 TRIBUNI.
 AGRIPPINA.
 LIVIA.
 SOSIA.
 PRAECONES.
 FLAMEN.
 TUBICINES.
 NUNTIUS.
 LICTORES.
 MINISTRI.
 TIBICINES.
 SERVUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The scene is laid at Rome, towards the latter part of the reign of Tiberius. Germanicus, the popular prince, is dead, and his widow Agrippina is living with her children at Rome in retirement. Drusus, the son of Tiberius, has been virtually nominated to the succession. But the whole political outlook is darkened by the figure of Sejanus, an adventurer of mean birth but of great ambition and capacity, who has obtained such influence with the emperor that he is now first minister of State, and it is feared that the succession may be set aside in his favour. All Rome is full of his spies—Satrius, Natta, and others—his power is unlimited, and he uses it for a close and grinding tyranny. At the opening of the scene a few patriotic citizens—Sabinus, Silius, and Latiaris—are discussing the present evils. They are joined by Cordus the historian and Arruntius the senator, both men of republican sympathies. The scene then proceeds as follows:—

Sab. But these our times
Are not the same, Arruntius.

Arr. Times? the men,
The men are not the same: 'tis we are base,
Poor, and degenerate from th' exalted strain
Of our great fathers. Where is now the soul
Of god-like Cato? he, that durst be good,
When Caesar durst be evil; and had power,
As not to live his slave, to die his master.
Or where's the constant Brutus? that (being proof 10
Against all charm of benefits) did strike
So brave a blow into the monster's heart
That fought unkindly to captive his country.
Oh, they are fled the light. Those mighty spirits
Lie raked up with their ashes in their urns,
And not a spark of their eternal fire

Glows in a present bosom. All's but blaze,
 Flashes, and smoke, wherewith we labour so,
 There's nothing Roman in us ; nothing good,
 Gallant, or great : 'tis true that Cordus says, 20
 ' Brave Cassius was the last of all that race.'

[*DRUSUS passes by.*]

Sab. Stand by, Lord Drusus.

Hat. Th' emperor's son, give place.

Sil. I like the prince well.

Arr. A riotous youth.

There's little hope of him.

Sab. That fault his age

Will, as it grows, correct. Methinks he bears

Himself each day, more nobly than other :

And wins no less on men's affections, 30

Than doth his father lose. Believe me, I love him ;

And chiefly for opposing to Sejanus.

Sil. And I, for gracing his young kinsmen so,

The sons of Prince Germanicus : it shows

A gallant clearness in him, a straight mind,

That envies not, in them, their father's name.

Arr. His name was, while he lived, above all envy :

And being dead, without it. Oh, that man !

If there were seeds of the old virtue left,

They lived in him. 40

Sil. He had the fruits, Arruntius,

More than the seeds : Sabinus and myself

Had means to know him, within ; and can report him.

We were his followers, (he would call us friends.)

He was a man most like to virtue ; in all

And every action nearer to the gods

Than men in nature ; of a body as fair

As was his mind ; and no less reverend

In face than fame : he could so use his state,

Temp'ring his greatness with his gravity,
As it avoided all self-love in him,
And spite in others. What his funerals lacked
In images, and pomp, they had supplied
With honourable sorrow, soldiers' sadness,
A kind of silent mourning, such as men
(Who know no tears, but from their captives) use
To show in so great losses.

50

Cor. I thought once,
Considering their forms, age, manner of deaths,
The nearness of the places where they fell,
T' have paralleled him with great Alexander :
For both were of best feature, of high race,
Yeared but to thirty, and, in foreign lands,
By their own people, alike made away.

60

Sab. I know not, for his death, how you might wrest
it :

But, for his life, it did as much disdain
Comparison with that voluptuous, rash,
Giddy, and drunken Macedon's, as mine
Doth with my bond-man's. All the good in him
(His valour and his fortune) he made his ;
But he had other touches of late Romans
That more did speak him : Pompey's dignity,
The innocence of Cato, Caesar's spirit,
Wise Brutus' temperance ; and every virtue,
Which parted unto others, gave them name,
Flowed mixed in him. He was the soul of goodness :
And all our praises of him are like streams
Drawn from a spring, that still rise full, and leave
The part remaining greatest.

70

Arr. I am sure
He was too great for us, and that they knew
Who did remove him hence.

80

Sab. When men grow fast
Honoured and loved, there is a trick in state
(Which jealous princes never fail to use)
How to decline that growth, with fair pretext,
And honourable colours of employment,
Either by embassy, the war, or such,
To shift them forth into another air,
Where they may purge, and lessen ; so was he : 90
And had his seconds there, sent by Tiberius,
And his more subtle dam, to discontent him ;
To breed and cherish mutinies ; detract
His greatest actions ; give audacious check
To his commands ; and work to put him out
In open act of treason. All which snares
When his wise cares prevented, a fine poison
Was thought on, to mature their practices.

Cor. Here comes Sejanus.

Sil. Now observe the stoops, 100
The bendings, and the falls.

Arr. Most creeping base ! [*They pass over the stage.*]

Sej. I note 'em well : no more. Say you.

Sat. My lord,
There is a gentleman of Rome would buy——

Sej. How do you call him you talked with ?

Sat. 'Please your lordship,
It is Eudemus, the physician
To Livia, Drusus' wife.

Sej. On with your suit. 110
Would buy, you said——

Sat. A tribune's place, my lord.

Sej. What will he give ?

Sat. Fifty sestertia.

Sej. Livia's physician, say you, is that fellow ?

Sat. It is, my lord ; your lordship's answer.

Sej. To what ?

Sat. The place, my lord. 'Tis for a gentleman
Your lordship will well like of when you see him ;
And one that you may make yours by the grant. 120

Sej. Well, let him bring his money, and his name.

Sat. 'Thank your lordship. He shall, my lord.

Sej. Come hither.

Know you this same Eudemus ? is he learned ?

Sat. Reputed so, my lord, and of deep practice.

Sej. Bring him in to me in the gallery ;

And take you cause to leave us there together :

I would confer with him, about a grief—— On.

Arr. So, yet another ? yet ? Oh, desperate state
Of grov'ling honour ! seest thou this, O sun, 130
And do we see thee after ? Methinks, day
Should lose his light when men do lose their shames,
And for the empty circumstance of life
Betray their cause of living.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Sejanus intrigues with Eudemus to gain for him the love of Livia. His real motive is, by her complicity, to remove Drusus from his path. Eudemus promises obedience.

Sej. Let me adore my Aesculapius.
Why, this indeed is physic ! and outspeaks
The knowledge of cheap drugs, or any use
Can be made out of it ! more comforting
Than all your opiates, juleps, apozems,
Magistral syrups, or—— Begone, my friend,
Not barely styled, but created so ;
Expect things greater than thy largest hopes
To overtake thee : fortune shall be taught

To know how ill she hath deserved thus long, 10
 To come behind thy wishes. Go, and speed.
 'Ambition makes more trusty slaves than need.'
 These fellows, by the favour of their art,
 Have still the means to tempt; oft-times the power.
 If Livia will be now corrupted, then
 Thou hast the way, Sejanus, to work out
 His secrets, who (thou know'st) endures thee not,
 Her husband Drusus: and to work against them.
 Prosper it, Pallas, thou that better'st wit;
 For Venus hath the smallest share in it. 20

[Enter TIBERIUS with Senators. One kneels to him.]

Tib. We not endure these flatteries, let him stand;
 Our empire, ensigns, axes, rods and state
 Take not away our human nature from us;
 Look up, on us, and fall before the gods.

Sej. How like a god speaks Caesar!

Arr. There observe!

He can endure that second; that's no flattery.
 Oh, what is it proud slime will not believe
 Of his own worth, to hear it equal praised
 Thus with the gods? 30

Cor. He did not hear it, sir.

Arr. He did not? Tut, he must not; we think meanly.
 'Tis your most courtly known confederacy
 To have your private parasite redeem
 What he in public subtilly will lose
 To making him a name.

Hat. Right mighty lord——

Tib. We must make up our ears 'gainst these assaults
 Of charming tongues; we pray you use no more
 These contumelies to us; style not us 40
 Or lord, or mighty, who profess our self
 The servant of the senate, and are proud

T' enjoy them our good, just, and favouring lords.

Cor. Rarely dissembled.

Arr. Prince-like to the life.

Sab. 'When power that may command so much descends,
Their bondage, when it stoops to, it intends.'

Tib. Whence are these letters?

Hat. From the senate.

Tib. So.

50

Whence these?

Lat. From thence too.

Tib. Are they sitting now?

Lat. They stay thy answer, Caesar.

Sil. If this man

Had but a mind allied unto his words,

How blest a fate were it to us, and Rome?

We could not think that state for which to change,

Although the aim were our old liberty:

The ghosts of those that fell for that would grieve 60

Their bodies lived not, now, again to serve.

'Men are deceived who think there can be thrall

Beneath a virtuous prince. Wish'd liberty

Ne'er lovelier looks than under such a crown.'

But, when his grace is merely but lip-good,

And that no longer than he airs himself

Abroad in public, there to seem to shun

The strokes and stripes of flatterers, which within

Are lechery unto him, and so feed

His brutish sense with their afflicting sound, 70

As (dead to virtue) he permits himself

Be carried like a pitcher by the ears

To every act of vice: this is a case

Deserves our fear, and doth presage the night

And close approach of blood and tyranny.

'Flattery is midwife unto princes' rage:

And nothing sooner doth help forth a tyrant
Than that, and whisperers' grace, who have the time,
The place, the pow'r, to make all men offenders.'

Arr. He should be told this ; and be bid dissemble 80
With fools and blind men : we that know the evil
Should hunt the palace rats, or give them bane ;
Fright hence these worse than ravens, that devour
The quick where they but prey upon the dead :
He shall be told it.

Sab. Stay, Arruntius,
We must abide our opportunity ;
And practice what is fit, as what is needful.
'It is not safe t' enforce a sovereign's ear :
Princes hear well, if they at all will hear.' 90

Arr. Ha ! say you so ? well. In the meantime, Jove,
(Say not, but I do call upon thee now)
Of all wild beasts preserve me from a tyrant ;
And of all tame, a flatterer.

Sil. 'Tis well pray'd.

Tib. Return the lords this voice, we are their creature,
And it is fit a good and honest prince,
Whom they out of their bounty have instructed
With so dilate and absolute a power,
Should owe the office of it to their service, 100
And good of all and every citizen.
Nor shall it e'er repent us to have wished
The senate just, and fav'ring lords unto us,
'Since their free loves do yield no less defence
T' a prince's state than his own innocence.'
Say then, there can be nothing in their thought
Shall want to please us that hath pleased them ;
Our suffrage rather shall prevent than stay
Behind their wills ; 'tis empire to obey
Where such, so great, so grave, so good determine. 110

Yet, for the suit of Spain, t' erect a temple
In honour of our mother and our self,
We must (with pardon of the senate) not
Assent thereto. Their lordships may object
Our not denying the same late request
Unto the Asian cities: we desire
That our defence for suffering that be known
In these brief reasons, with our after purpose.
Since deified Augustus hindered not
A temple to be built at Pergamum, 120
In honour of himself and sacred Rome;
We, that have all his deeds and words observed
Ever, in place of laws, the rather followed
That pleasing precedent, because with ours,
The senate's reverence also, there, was joined.
But as, t' have once received it, may deserve
The gain of pardon; so, to be adored
With the continued style, and note of gods,
Through all the provinces, were wild ambition,
And no less pride: yea, even Augustus' name 130
Would early vanish, should it be profaned
With such promiscuous flatteries. For our part,
We here protest it, and are covetous
Posterity should know it, we are mortal,
And can but deeds of men: 'twere glory enough,
Could we be truly a prince. And, they shall add
Abounding grace unto our memory,
That shall report us worthy our forefathers,
Careful of your affairs, constant in dangers,
And not afraid of any private frown 140
For public good. These things shall be to us
Temples and statues, reared in your minds,
The fairest, and most during imag'ry:
For those of stone or brass, if they become

Odious in judgement of posterity,
 Are more contemned as dying sepulchres
 Than ta'en for living monuments. We then
 Make here our suit, alike to gods and men ;
 The one, until the period of our race,
 T' inspire us with a free and quiet mind, 150
 Discerning both divine and human laws ;
 The other, to vouchsafe us after death,
 An honourable mention, and fair praise,
 T' accompany our actions and our name :
 The rest of greatness princes may command,
 And (therefore) may neglect ; only, a long,
 A lasting, high, and happy memory
 They should, without being satisfied, pursue.
 Contempt of fame, begets contempt of virtue.

Nat. Rare !

160

Sat. Most divine !

Sej. The oracles are ceased,
 That only Caesar, with their tongue, might speak.

Arr. Let me be gone : most felt and open this !

Cor. Stay.

Arr. What, to hear more cunning, and fine words,
 With their sound flattered, e'er their sense be meant ?

Tib. Their choice of Antium¹, there to place the gift
 Vow'd to the goddess for our mother's health,

We will the senate know, we fairly like ;

170

As also of their grant to Lepidus,

For his repairing the Aemilian place,

And restoration of those monuments :

Their grace too in confining of Silanus

To th' other isle Cithera, at the suit

Of his religious sister, much commends

Their policy, so tempered with their mercy.

¹ For the allusions in this speech see Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 69-72.

But for the honours which they have decreed
 To our Sejanus, to advance his statue
 In Pompey's theatre (whose ruining fire 180
 His vigilance, and labour kept restrained
 In that one loss) they have therein out-gone
 Their own great wisdoms, by their skilful choice,
 And placing of their bounties on a man,
 Whose merit more adorns the dignity,
 Than that can him : and gives a benefit,
 In taking, greater than it can receive.
 Blush not, Sejanus, thou great aid of Rome,
 Associate of our labours, our chief helper ;
 Let us not force thy simple modesty 190
 With offering at thy praise, for more we cannot,
 Since there's no voice can take it. No man here
 Receive our speeches as hyperboles :
 For we are far from flattering our friend
 (Let envy know) as from the need to flatter.
 Nor let them ask the causes of our praise ;
 Princes have still their grounds reared with themselves,
 Above the poor low flats of common men ;
 And who will search the reasons of their acts,
 Must stand on equal bases. Lead away. 200
 Our loves unto the senate. [*Exeunt TIBERIUS and SEJANUS.*

Arr. Caesar.

Sab. Peace.

Cor. Great Pompey's theatre was never ruined
 Till now, that proud Sejanus hath a statue
 Rear'd on his ashes.

Arr. Place the shame of soldiers,
 Above the best of generals ? crack the world !
 And bruise the name of Romans into dust,
 E're we behold it ! 210

Sil. Check your passion ;

Lord Drusus tarries.

Dru. Is my father mad ?

Weary of life, and rule, lords ? thus to heave
An idol up with praise ! make him his mate !
His rival in the empire !

Arr. Oh, good prince.

Dru. Allow him statues, titles, honours, such
As he himself refuseth ?

Arr. Brave, brave Drusus !

220

Dru. The first ascents to sovereignty are hard ;
But, entered once, there never wants or means,
Or ministers, to help th' aspirer on.

Arr. True, gallant Drusus.

Dru. We must shortly pray
To Modesty, that he will rest contented—

Arr. Aye, where he is, and not write emperor.

[*SEJANUS enters followed with clients.*

Sej. There is your bill, and yours ; bring you your
man.

I have mov'd for you, too, Latiaris.

Dru. What ?

220

Is your vast greatness grown so blindly bold,
That you will over us ?

Sej. Why then give way.

Dru. Give way, Colossus ? do you lift ? advance you ?
Take that.

[*DRUSUS strikes him.*

Arr. Good ! brave ! excellent, brave prince !

Dru. Nay, come, approach. What, stand you off ? at
gaze ?

It looks too full of death for thy cold spirits.

Avoid mine eye, dull camel, or my sword

Shall make thy brav'ry fitter for a grave,

240

Than for a triumph. I'll advance a statue

O' your own bulk ; but 't shall be on the cross :

Where I will nail your pride at breadth and length,
And crack those sinews, which are yet but stretched
With your swollen fortune's rage.

Arr. A noble prince!

All. A Castor¹, a Castor, a Castor, a Castor!

Sej. He that, with such wrong moved, can bear it
through

With patience, and an even mind, knows how
To turn it back. Wrath covered carries fate: 250
Revenge is lost, if I profess my hate.
What was my practice late, I'll now pursue,
As my fell justice. This hath styled it new. [*Exit.*

ACT II

Sejanus, with the help of Livia, secretly poisons Drusus, and then proceeds to plot against his other antagonists.

ACT II. SCENE II

Enter TIBERIUS, attended.

Tib. Is yet Sejanus come?

Sej. He's here, dread Caesar.

Tib. Let all depart that chamber, and the next:
Sit down, my comfort. When the master prince
Of all the world, Sejanus, saith he fears,
Is it not fatal?

Sej. Yes, to those are feared.

Tib. And not to him?

Sej. Not, if he wisely turn
That part of fate he holdeth, first on them. 10

Tib. That nature, blood, and laws of kind forbid.

Sej. Do policy and state forbid it?

Tib. No.

¹ Brother of Pollux: deified and worshipped at Rome.

Sej. The rest of poor respects, then, let go by ;
State is enough to make th' act just, them guilty.

Tib. Long hate pursues such acts.

Sej. Whom hatred frights,
Let him not dream of sov'reignty.

Tib. Are rites
Of faith, love, piety, to be trod down, 20
Forgotten, and made vain ?

Sej. All for a crown.
The prince who shames a tyrant's name to bear,
Shall never dare do anything, but fear ;
All the command of sceptres quite doth perish,
If it begin religious thoughts to cherish :
Whole empires fall, swayed by those nice respects ;
It is the licence of dark deeds protects
Ev'n states most hated, when no laws resist
The sword, but that it acteth what it list. 30

Tib. Yet so, we may do all things cruelly,
Not safely.

Sej. Yes, and do them thoroughly.

Tib. Knows yet Sejanus whom we point at ?

Sej. Aye,
Or else my thought, my sense, or both do err :
'Tis Agrippina.

Tib. She, and her proud race.

Sej. Proud ! dangerous, Caesar. For in them apace
The father's spirit shoots up. Germanicus 40
Lives in their looks, their gait, their form, t' upbraid us
With his close death, if not revenge the same.

Tib. The act's not known.

Sej. Not proved : but whispering fame
Knowledge and proof doth to the jealous give,
Who, than to fail, would their own thought believe.
It is not safe, the children draw long breath,

That are provoked by a parent's death.

Tib. It is as dangerous to make them hence,
If nothing but their birth be their offence. 50

Sej. Stay, till they strike at Caesar ; then their crime
Will be enough, but late and out of time
For him to punish.

Tib. Do they purpose it ?

Sej. You know, sir, thunder speaks not till it hit.
Be not secure ; none swiftlier are oppressed
Than they whom confidence betrays to rest.
Let not your daring make your danger such :
All power 's to be feared, where 'tis too much.
The youths are of themselves hot, violent, 60
Full of great thought ; and that male-spirited dame,
Their mother, slacks no means to put them on :
By large allowance, popular presentings,
Increase of train, and state, suing for titles,
Hath them commended with like prayers, like vows,
To the same gods, with Caesar : days and nights
She spends in banquets and ambitious feasts
For the nobility ; where Caius Silius,
Titus Sabinus, old Arruntius,
Asinius Gallus, Furnius, Regulus, 70
And others of that discontented list,
Are the prime guests. There, and to these, she tells
Whose niece she was, whose daughter, and whose wife.
And then must they compare her with Augusta ;
Aye, and prefer her too ; commend her form,
Extol her fruitfulness ; at which a shower
Falls for the memory of Germanicus,
Which they blow over straight with windy praise,
And puffing hopes of her aspiring sons,
Who, with these hourly ticklings, grow so pleased, 80
And wantonly conceited of themselves,

As now they stick not to believe they're such
As these do give them out ; and would be thought
(More than competitors) immediate heirs.
Whilst to their thirst of rule they win the rout
(That's still the friend of novelty) with hope
Of future freedom, which on every change
That greedily, though emptily expects.
Caesar, 'tis age in all things breeds neglects,
And princes that will keep old dignity 90
Must not admit too youthful heirs stand by ;
Not their own issue ; but so darkly set
As shadows are in picture, to give height
And lustre to themselves.

Tib. We will command
Their rank thoughts down, and with a stricter hand
Than we have yet put forth ; their trains must bate,
Their titles, feasts and factions.

Sej. Or your state.
But how, sir, will you work ? 100

Tib. Confine 'em.

Sej. No.
They are too great, and that too faint a blow
To give them now ; it would have served at first,
When with the weakest touch their knot had burst,
But now your care must be not to detect
The smallest cord or line of your suspect ;
For such, who know the weight of princes' fear,
Will, when they find themselves discovered, rear
Their forces, like seen snakes that else would lie 110
Rolled in their circles, close : nought is more high,
Daring, or desperate, than offenders found ;
Where guilt is, rage and courage both abound.
The course must be to let them still swell up,
Riot, and surfeit on blind fortune's cup ;

Give 'em more place, more dignities, more style,
Call 'em to court, to senate ; in the while,
Take from their strength some one or twain, or more,
Of the main fautors ; (it will fright the store)
And, by some by-occasion. Thus, with sleight 120
You shall disarm them first ; and they (in night
Of their ambition) not perceive the train,
Till in the engine they are caught and slain.

Tib. We would not kill, if we knew how to save ;
Yet, than a throne, 'tis cheaper give a grave.
Is there no way to bind by deserts ?

Sej. Sir, wolves do change their hair, but not their
hearts.

While thus your thought unto a mean is tied,
You neither dare enough, nor do provide.
All modesty is fond ; and chiefly where 130
The subject is no less compelled to bear
Than praise his sov'reign's acts.

Tib. We can no longer
Keep on our mask to thee, our dear Sejanus ;
Thy thoughts are ours in all, and we but proved
Their voice, in our designs, which by assenting
Hath more confirmed us than if heart'ning Jove
Had, from his hundred statues, bid us strike,
And at the stroke clickt all his marble thumbs :
But who shall first be struck ? 140

Sej. First, Caius Silius ;
He is the most of mark, and most of danger :
In power and reputation equal strong,
Having commanded an imperial army
Seven years together, vanquished Sacrovir
In Germany, and thence obtained to wear
The ornaments triumphal. His steep fall,
By how much it doth give the weightier crack,

Will send more wounding terror to the rest,
 Command them stand aloof, and give more way 150
 To our surprising of the principal.

Tib. But what, Sabinus?

Sej. Let him grow a while,
 His fate is not yet ripe : we must not pluck
 At all together, lest we catch ourselves.
 And there's Arruntius too, he only talks.
 But Sosia, Silius' wife, would be wound in
 Now, for she hath a fury in her breast,
 More than Hell ever knew ; and would be sent
 Thither in time. Then is there one Cremutius 160
 Cordus, a writing fellow, they have got
 To gather notes of the precedent times,
 And make them into annals ; a most tart
 And bitter spirit (I hear) who under colour
 Of praising those, doth tax the present state,
 Censures the men, the actions, leaves no trick,
 No practice unexamined, parallels
 The times, the governments ; a professed champion
 For the old liberty——

Tib. A perishing wretch. 170

As if there were that chaos bred in things,
 That laws and liberty would not rather choose
 To be quite broken, and ta'en hence by us,
 Than have the stain to be preserved by such.
 Have we the means to make these guilty first?

Sej. Trust that to me : let Caesar, by his power,
 But cause a formal meeting of the senate,
 I will have matter and accusers ready.

ACT III

Silius and Cordus are accused of treason. Silius, at the end
 of his defence, stabs himself in the Senate. Cordus is con-

demned, and led away for sentence. Sejanus then asks Tiberius' leave to marry Livia. Tiberius reminds him of his humble rank, and Sejanus, apparently satisfied but really indignant, withdraws his request. In order, however, to gain a more ostensible control over public affairs he advises Tiberius to withdraw to Capreae and leave the Empire in his hands. Tiberius appears to consent, but the proposed marriage with Livia has aroused his suspicions, and before leaving Rome he privately commissions Macro to keep watch upon Sejanus.

ACT IV. SCENE IV

MACRO, CALIGULA.

Mac. Sir, but observe how thick your dangers meet
In his clear drifts ! your mother and your brothers,
Now cited to the senate ! their friend Gallus,
Feasted to-day by Caesar, since committed !
Sabinus here we met, hurried to fetters !
The senators all struck with fear and silence,
Save those whose hopes depend not on good means,
But force their private prey from public spoil !
And you must know, if here you stay, your state
Is sure to be the subject of his hate, 10
As now the object.

Cal. What would you advise me ?

Mac. To go for Capreae presently : and there
Give up yourself entirely to your uncle.
Tell Caesar (since your mother is accused
To fly for succours to Augustus' statue,
And to the army with your brethren) you
Have rather chose to place your aids in him
Than live suspected, or in hourly fear
To be thrust out by bold Sejanus' plots : 20
Which you shall confidently urge to be
Most full of peril to the state, and Caesar,
As being laid to his peculiar ends,
And not to be let run with common safety.

All which (upon the second) I'll make plain,
So both shall love and trust with Caesar gain.

Cal. Away then, let's prepare us for our journey.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I

SEJANUS.

Sej. Swell, swell, my joys ; and faint not to declare
Yourselves as ample as your causes are.

I did not live till now ; this my first hour :

Wherein I see my thoughts reached by my power.

But this, and gripe my wishes. Great and high,

The world knows only two, that's Rome and I,

My roof receives me not ; 'tis air I tread :

And, at each step, I feel my advanced head

Knock out a star in heav'n ! reared to this height,

All my desires seem modest, poor, and slight,

10

That did before sound impudent ; 'tis place,

Not blood, discerns the noble and the base.

Is there not something more than to be Caesar ?

Must we rest there ? it irks t' have come so far,

To be so near a stay. *Caligula,*

Would thou stood'st stiff, and many in our way.

Winds lose their strength when they do empty fly,

Unmet of woods or buildings ; great fires die,

That want their matter to withstand them : so,

It is our grief, and will be our loss, to know

20

Our power shall want opposites ; unless

The gods, by mixing in the cause, would bless

Our fortune with their conquest. That were worth

Sejanus' strife ; durst fates but bring it forth.

[*Enter* TERENTIUS, SATRIUS, NATTA.

Ter. Safety to great Sejanus.

Sej. Now, Terentius ?

Ter. Hears not my lord the wonder ?

Sej. Speak it, no.

Ter. I meet it violent in the people's mouths,
Who run in routs to Pompey's theatre 30
To view your statue : which, they say, sends forth
A smoke, as from a furnace, black and dreadful.

Sej. Some traitor hath put fire in : you, go see,
And let the head be taken off, to look
What 'tis—Some slave hath practised an imposture
To stir the people. How now ? why return you ?

Sat. The head, my lord, already is ta'en off,
I saw it : and, at op'ning, there leapt out
A great and monstrous serpent !

Sej. Monstrous ! why ? 40
Had it a beard, and horns ? no heart ? a tongue
Forked as flattery ? looked it of the hue
To such as live in great men's bosoms ? was
The spirit of it Macro's ?

Nat. May it please
The most divine Sejanus, in my days
(And by his sacred fortune, I affirm it)
I have not seen a more extended, grown,
Foul, spotted, venomous, ugly—

Sej. Oh, the fates ! 50
What a wild muster 's here of attributes,
T' express a worm, a snake ?

Ter. But how that should
Come there, my lord !

Sej. What ! and you too, Terentius ?
I think you mean to make 't a prodigy
In your reporting ?

Ter. Can the wise Sejanus
Think heav'n hath meant it less ?

Sej. Oh, superstition ! 60

Why, then the falling of our bed, that brake
This morning, burd'ned with the populous weight
Of our expecting clients to salute us,
Or running of the cat betwixt our legs,
As we set forth unto the Capitol,
Were prodigies.

Ter. I think them ominous !
And would they had not hap'nèd. As to-day,
The fate of some your servants ! who, declining
Their way, not able, for the throng, to follow, 70
Slipt down the Gemonies, and brake their necks !
Besides, in taking your last augury,
No prosperous bird appeared, but croaking ravens
Flagged up and down : and from the sacrifice
Flew to the prison where they sat all night,
Beating the air with their obstreperous beaks !
I dare not counsel, but I could entreat,
That great Sejanus would attempt the gods
Once more with sacrifice.

Sej. What excellent fools 80
Religion makes of men ? Believes Terentius
(If these were dangers, as I shame to think them)
The gods could change the certain course of fate ?
Or, if they could they would (now in a moment)
For a beeve's fat, or less, be bribed t' invert
Those long decrees ? then think the gods, like flies,
Are to be taken with the steam of flesh,
Or blood diffused about their altars : think
Their power as cheap as I esteem it small.
Of all the throng that fill th' Olympian hall, 90
And (without pity) lade poor Atlas' back,
I know not that one deity but Fortune,
To whom I would throw up in begging smoke
One grain of incense ; or whose ear I'd buy

With thus much oil. Her I, indeed, adore ;
 And keep her grateful image in my house,
 Sometime belonging to a Roman king,
 But now called mine, as by the better style :
 To her I care not if (for satisfying
 Your scrupulous phant'sies) I go offer. Bid 100
 Our priest prepare us honey, milk, and poppy,
 His masculine odours, and night-vestments : say,
 Our rites are instant, which performed, you'll see
 How vain and worthy laughter your fears be. [*Exeunt.*]

Macro goes to Capreae and returns with a sealed letter which, he tells Sejanus, is a recommendation to the Senate to confer upon him the Tribunician Power, which is equivalent to a nomination as Tiberius' successor. Sejanus, full of triumph, comes down to the Senate-house to receive his honours. But, to the amazement of the Senators, the letter after many long preliminaries ends by casting doubt on Sejanus' loyalty and ordering his arrest. Macro enters to carry the order into effect.

ACT V. SCENE X

Mac. Hail to the consuls, and this noble senate.

Sej. Is Macro here ? Oh, thou art lost, Sejanus.

Mac. Sit still, and unaffrighted, reverend Fathers,
 Macro, by Caesar's grace, the new-made provost,
 And now possessed of the praetorian bands,
 An honour late belonged to that proud man,
 Bids you be safe : and to your constant doom
 Of his deservings offers you the surety
 Of all the soldiers, tribunes, and centurions,
 Received in our command. 10

Reg. Sejanus, Sejanus,
 Stand forth, Sejanus.

Sej. Am I called ?

Mac. Aye, thou,
 Thou insolent monster, art bid stand.

Sej. Why, Macro,
It hath been otherwise between you and I ;
This court that knows us both hath been a difference,
And can, if it be pleased to speak, confirm
Whose insolence is most.

20

Mac. Come down, Typhoeus¹ ;
If mine be most, lo ! thus I make it more ;
Kick up thy heels in air, tear off thy robe,
Play with thy beard and nostrils. Thus 'tis fit
(And no man take compassion of thy state)
To use th' ingrateful viper, tread his brains
Into the earth.

Reg. Forbear.

Mac. If I could lose
All my humanity now, 'twere well to torture
So meriting a traitor. Wherefore, Fathers,
Sit you amazed and silent ? and not censure
This wretch, who, in the hour he first rebelled
'Gainst Caesar's bounty, did condemn himself ?
Phlegra, the field where all the sons of earth
Mustered against the gods, did ne'er acknowledge
So proud and huge a monster.

30

Reg. Take him hence.
And all the gods guard Caesar !

Tri. Take him hence.

40

Hat. Hence.

Cot. To the dungeon with him.

San. He deserves it.

Sen. Crown all our doors with bays.

San. And let an ox,
With gilded horns and garlands, straight be led
Unto the Capitol.

¹ A Titan, struck by the lightning of Jupiter.

Hat. And sacrificed
To Jove for Caesar's safety.

Tri. All our gods 50
Be present still to Caesar.

Sen. Diana, Pallas, Juno, Mercury
All guard him.

Mac. Forth, thou prodigy of men.

Cot. Let all the traitor's titles be defaced.

Tri. His images and statues be pulled down.

Hat. His chariot-wheels be broken.

Arr. And the legs
Of the poor horses, that deserved nought,
Let them be broken too. 60

Lep. Oh, violent change,
And whirl of men's affections !

Arr. Like, as both
Their bulks and souls were bound on Fortune's wheel,
And must act only with her motion.

Lep. Who would depend upon the popular air,
Or voice of men, that have to-day beheld
(That, which if all the gods had fore-declared,
Would not have been believed) Sejanus' fall ?
' He, that this morn rose proudly, as the sun, 70
And breaking through a mist of clients' breath,
Came on, as gazed at and admired as he,
When superstitious Moors salute his light !
That had our servile nobles waiting him
As common grooms ; and hanging on his look,
No less than human life on destiny !
That had men's knees as frequent as the gods ;
And sacrifices more than Rome had altars :
And this man fall ! fall ! Aye, without a look,
That durst appear his friend, or lend so much 80
Of vain relief to his changed state as pity !'

Arr. They that before, like gnats, played in his beams,
And thronged to circumscribe him, now not seen,
Nor deign to hold a common seat with him !
Others that waited him unto the senate
Now inhumanely ravish him to prison !
Whom, but this morn, they followed as their lord :
Guard through the streets, bound like a fugitive !
Instead of wreaths give fetters, strokes for stoops :
Blind shames for honours, and black taunts for titles ! 90
Who would trust slippery chance ?

Lep. They that would make
Themselves her spoil ; and foolishly forget,
When she doth flatter, that she comes to prey.
Fortune, thou hadst no deity if men
Had wisdom : we have placed thee so high
By fond belief in thy felicity.

Sen. The gods guard Caesar. All the gods guard Caesar.
[*Shout within.*]

Mac. Now, great Sejanus, you that awed the state,
And sought to bring the nobles to your whip, 100
That would be Caesar's tutor, and dispose
Of dignities and offices ! that had
The public head still bare to your designs,
And made the general voice to echo yours !
That looked for salutations twelve score off,
And would have pyramids, yea temples, reared
To your huge greatness ! Now you lie as flat
As was your pride advanced.

Reg. Thanks to the gods.

Sen. And praise to Macro, that hath saved Rome. 110
Liberty, liberty, liberty. Lead on,
And praise to Macro that hath saved Rome.

Sejanus is led away guarded, but the people storm the guard
and tear him in pieces.

CHAPTER VI

ROMANTIC TRAGEDY

IN *Sejanus* we saw the action of event upon character: in *Vittoria Corombona* we are confronted with the far more difficult problem of character as determining event. The whole issue is evolved from the force and initiative of human personality; there is not a line or an episode but bears its part in the work of delineation. Vittoria is one of the most wonderful figures in all tragedy; she ranks with Clytemnestra and with Lady Macbeth; she belongs not to the theatre but to life itself. The persons who surround her and who follow her sinister course are so vivid that they startle us; it is not the player's voice that we hear, but the actual cry of sinning and suffering humanity. The light which Shakespeare throws upon the dark places of the soul is of a purer and more divine radiance, but not even Shakespeare has presented them in more essential truth.

Fully to illustrate this opinion would involve a citation of the entire play, and this for many reasons is here impossible. It may, however, be of service if we briefly indicate the character of Vittoria as Webster depicts it, premising that our account stands to his portraiture as an analytical programme to a symphony.

She is sprung from an ancient and noble house which has fallen into decay. Her father, a gambling spendthrift, lost all his estate at the tables, and, some ten years before the play begins, sold her hand, without dowry, to one of his boon-companions. Her husband, Camillo, is a sordid creature of low

birth and despicable qualities; her mother, Cornelia, is foolish and affectionate, high-principled, but utterly tactless and weak-minded; of her two brothers the elder, Flamineo, is a frank blackguard with no virtues but the worship of courage, and no aim but to raise his fortune by any unscrupulous means in his power; the younger, Marcello, is a pale copy of his mother, equally well-meaning and even more inefficient. On her father's death the family remove to Rome, where they live in such extreme poverty that Flamineo has to pay for his education by 'heeling his Tutor's stockings'. So amid sordid privation¹ she grows up from girlhood: strong, fearless, of unbounded ambition, a consummate actress who has been taught dissimulation by stress of circumstances, determined to conquer the world by that fatal gift of beauty which is her keenest weapon. As the years go on her contempt for her husband turns to hatred, she chafes at the petty life and the restricted limits, and though she still treats him with the external marks of obedience there is nothing of any avail to check her impatience and her discontent. Little by little her capacity of love is overlaid, until all that is left of softer feeling is a certain reliance on her worthless brother, a certain half-tender regard for her mother's good opinion, and a curiously impressionable imagination, especially sensitive to the touch of horror and pain. And against these there stand her indomitable courage and her overmastering singleness of purpose.

Flamineo returns from the University and enters the service of the great duke Brachiano. The duke turns his eyes upon Vittoria and finds her beautiful. For a time she resists him, but he presses his suit and she yields, for ambition, not for love, on con-

¹ The accusations of riot belong to the later years, after she has met Brachiano; and it may be observed that Camillo dies in debt.

dition of marriage. There are two obstacles in the path, her husband and the Duchess Isabella. Flamineo urges her, for it will mean his advancement as well as her own. Ambition urges her, for it will mean wealth and power and emancipation from the hateful conditions of her present life. She looks to her husband, he shows himself more than usually odious, and she falls. In careful and demure phrase she tells Brachiano of a dream in which she has seen Isabella and Camillo dead, and leaves the poison to work. The dream comes true. Brachiano, infatuated with his passion, makes away with the duchess; Flamineo murders Camillo at a vaulting-match; and then the law steps in and sets Vittoria on her trial. The scene which follows is one of the classics of dramatic literature. She is guilty, the audience knows that she is guilty, yet her defence is so brave, so masterly, so dignified, that we are almost cheated into acquittal. From first to last she puts the whole court in the wrong, she takes every point and turns it to her own advantage. The pedantic lawyer begins his prosecution in Latin, she bids him 'speak his usual tongue', lest the spectators should fail to understand her innocence. The judge censures her for coming in gay apparel to answer for her husband's murder: she replies, with the flash of a rapier:—

Had I foreknown his death, as you suggest,
I would have bespoke my mourning.

The vile epithets which are heaped upon her serve only to strengthen our sympathy, and when at last she is condemned we are hard put to it not to rise in protest.

She is sentenced to imprisonment, and so plays upon Brachiano's jealousy (for her behaviour at the trial has won her another suitor) that he breaks her prison and carries her off to his castle at Padua. Thither her enemies follow in pursuit: Brachiano

is poisoned, and she is left without help or succour in the world. A weaker woman would have fled: she stands her ground, soothes the dying moments of her husband, and then awaits the worst. Flamineo turns against her; she meets him with defiance. The ministers of death close round her, she challenges them to do their worst, and will not have her maid killed before her lest she go unattended into the unknown. When the fatal blow is struck she meets it with an undaunted resolution, then, as the darkness gathers round her with all its terror and mystery, she breaks into the cry:—

My soul, like to a ship in a black storm,
Is driven I know not whither,

and at her last breath, in a passion of despair which not even Webster's formal couplet can obliterate, she confesses the failure and emptiness of her life.

The keynote of her character is that she puts power in the place of love. She does not even love Brachiano, but marries him because he is like wax in her hand and because through his means she will govern his dukedom. At the critical moment after the trial she beats down his spasm of jealous anger with a sheer dominating force which brings him at once to her feet. When he is mortally hurt at the tourney her first thought, after the instinctive cry of horror, is that she is lost, that his death will leave her defenceless: a thought which no lover could possibly have conceived at such a time. And she stands by his dying bed, with imminent doom before her, partly from a natural and womanly kindness to the man who has given her everything, and partly from a pride of race that even in extremest peril disdains to fly.

Of the other characters there is not one but repays particular study and consideration. What subtlety of insight in the presentation of Flamineo, who builds his fortune upon his sister's crime, and

is stung to ungovernable anger when he hears her name attacked; who breaks faith with her when he is doubtful about his own reward, and as he lies dying turns to praise her courage: or in that of Cornelia, whose mistimed interference hastens the very catastrophe which she wishes to avert; but who in one scene of almost unbearable pathos cleaves our very heart with the cry of tortured motherhood. Our very pulse checks when, to save Flamineo, she tries to lay the blame on his murdered brother:—

Indeed, my younger boy presumed too much
Upon his manhood, gave him bitter words,
Drew his sword first; and so, I know not how,
For I was out of my wits, he fell with 's head
Just in my bosom.

The madness which comes upon her afterwards is inevitable. No woman, much less a woman of Cornelia's weakness, could have endured that strain.

The faults are as obvious as they are accidental. Elizabethan taste was fond of the sight of bloodshed, and Webster has given his audience their fill: the dumb-shows are awkwardly contrived (though there is a touch of fine horror in the first of them), and the use of the supernatural is clumsy and half-hearted. But all these could be pruned away without any sensible breach in the continuity of the plot: they are mere bind-weeds and parasites which close upon it from outside. That Webster used them ill is only a proof that he is not Shakespeare: discard them, and the vitality of the plot is strengthened by their removal. It is a terrible, a tremendous drama. There are a few moments of 'idle mirth', but they are too grim for laughter. There are a few moments of dark and sombre beauty, like that dirge 'of the earth earthy' which Cornelia

sings over Marcelllo's bier¹, but they are too few for relief. Its scenery is like the seventh circle of the *Inferno*: the scarred cliff, the murky air, the river of blood in which sins of murder are expiated: if we walk by that path we need a strong head and a firm foothold. Yet when we lay the book down we have no memory of material horrors: we think only of the human nature that has been revealed by lightning-flashes of genius, and the one heroic figure, splendid even in crime, which stands erect amid the havoc and the ruin.

NOTE.—Among the chief contemporary tragedies may be mentioned *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603) by Heywood; *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) and *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) by Cyril Tourneur; Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois* (1607) and *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (1613); *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610) by Beaumont and Fletcher; *The Virgin Martyr* (printed 1622) by Dekker and Massinger; and *The Broken Heart* (1633) by John Ford.

JOHN WEBSTER (? 1580–? 1625) was the son of a London tailor. In 1602 he joined the band of dramatists who were in the service of Philip Henslowe, and began his career by collaborating in a tragedy called *Caesar's Fall*, perhaps intended as a rival to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which was produced in that year. After a few more insignificant works he was employed to make additions to the *Malcontent* by John Marston, and about the same time formed a partnership with Dekker, which resulted in the comedies of *Westward Ho* (1604) and *Northward Ho* (1605). Somewhere about 1607 he wrote *Vittoria Corombona*, the first play in which he appeared single-handed, and by far the greatest of all his dramatic works. It was produced, perhaps at the Curtain Theatre, in the winter of 1607–8, Burbage taking the part of Brachiano, but was not published until 1612. Two more tragedies followed, *Appius and Virginia* about 1609, and the *Duchess of Malfi* about 1616. His later plays, some of which are of doubtful authenticity, are less important. He was evidently a close student of Shakespeare, to whom his tragedies stand nearer than do those of any other Elizabethan dramatist.

¹ See Vol. I, p. 296.

VITTORIA COROMBONA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MONTICELSO, a Cardinal, afterwards Pope.

FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS, Duke of Florence.

BRACHIANO, otherwise Paulo Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano, husband of Isabella.

GIOVANNI, his son.

COUNT LODOVICO.

CAMILLO, husband of Vittoria.

FLAMINEO, brother of Vittoria, secretary to Brachiano.

MARCELLO, brother of Vittoria, attendant on Francisco de Medicis.

HORTENSIO.

ANTONELLI.

GASPARO.

FARNESE.

CARLO.

PEDRO.

DOCTOR.

CONJURER.

LAWYER.

JAQUES.

JULIO.

CHRISTOPHERO.

AMBASSADORS, PHYSICIANS, OFFICERS, ATTENDANTS, &c.

ISABELLA, sister of Francisco de Medicis, wife of Brachiano.

VITTORIA COROMBONA, married first to Camillo, afterwards to Brachiano.

CORNELIA, mother of Vittoria.

ZANCHE, a Moor, waiting-woman to Vittoria.

MATRON of a House of Convertites.

Scene : Rome and Padua.

Vittoria, young, beautiful and ambitious, has won the heart of Brachiano. With the help of Flamineo, she murders her husband, and causes Brachiano to murder his wife, Isabella, so that there may be no bar to their marriage. The two deaths follow each other so quickly that suspicion is aroused, and Vittoria is brought before Cardinal Monticelso to be tried.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in Monticelso's Mansion.*

Enter FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS, MONTICELSO, the six lieger¹
Ambassadors, BRACHIANO, VITTORIA COROMBONA,
FLAMINEO, MARCELLO, LAWYER, and a Guard.

Mont. (to BRACH.). Forbear, my lord, here is no place
assigned you:

This business by His Holiness is left
To our examination.

Brach. May it thrive with you!

[*Lays a rich gown under him.*]

Fran. de Med. A chair there for his lordship!

Brach. Forbear your kindness: an unbidden guest
Should travel as Dutchwomen go to Church,
Bear their stools with them.

Mont. At your pleasure, sir.

[*To VITT.*] Stand to the table, gentlewoman.

[*To LAWYER*]

Now Signior

Fall to your plea. 11

Law. Domine iudex, converte oculos in hanc pestem,
mulierum corruptissimam.²

Vit. Cor. What's he?

Fran. de Med. A lawyer that pleads against you.

Vit. Cor. Pray, my lord, let him speak his usual tongue.
I'll make no answer else.

Fran. de Med. Why, you understand Latin.

Vit. Cor. I do, sir; but amongst this auditory
Which come to hear my cause, the half or more
May be ignorant in 't. 20

¹ i. e. Ambassador in ordinary, resident at the Court, as distinct from an Envoy sent for a special purpose. The word is also written *Leger* by Johnson, and *Leaguer* by Sir Walter Scott.

² 'My Lord Judge, turn your eyes upon this plague, this wickedest of women.'

Mont. Go on, sir.

Vit. Cor. By your favour,
I will not have my accusation clouded
In a strange tongue ; all this assembly
Shall hear what you can charge me with.

Fran. de Med. Signior,
You need not stand on't much ; pray change your
language.

Mont. Oh, for God's sake !—Gentlewoman, your credit
Shall be more famous by it.

Law. Well then, have at you ! 30

Vit. Cor. I am at the mark, sir : I'll give aim to you
And tell you how near you shoot.

Law. Most literated judges, please your lordships
So to connive your judgements to the view
Of this debauched and diversivulent¹ woman,
Who such a black concatenation
Of mischief hath effected, that to extirp
The memory of't, must be the consummation
Of her and her projections.

Vit. Cor. What's all this ? 40

Law. Hold your peace :
Exorbitant sins must have exulceration.

Vit. Cor. Surely, my lords, this lawyer here hath
swallowed
Some 'pothecaries' bills, or proclamations ;
And now the hard and undigestible words
Come up, like stones we use give hawks for physic :
Why, this is Welsh to Latin.

Law. My lords, the woman

¹ A burlesque word formed on the analogy of 'malevolent'. It is intended to mean 'desiring strife' ; as 'exorbitant sins must have exulceration' (l. 42) is intended to mean that extreme wickedness calls for extreme censure.

Knows not her tropes nor figures, nor is perfect
 In the academic derivation 50
 Of grammatical elocution.

Fran. de Med. Sir, your pains
 Shall be well spared, and your deep eloquence
 Be worthily applauded amongst those
 Which understand you.

Law. My good lord,—

Fran. de Med. Sir,
 Put up your papers in your fustian bag—
[FRANCISCO speaks this as in scorn.]

Cry mercy, sir, 'tis buckram—and accept
 My notion of your learned verbosity. 60

Law. I most graduatically thank your lordship:
 I shall have use for them elsewhere.

Mont. (to VITTORIA). I shall be plainer with you, and
 paint out

Your follies in more natural red and white
 Than that upon your cheek.

Vit. Cor. Oh, you mistake.
 You raise a blood as noble in this cheek
 As ever was your mother's.

Mont.
 Observe this creature here, my honoured lords,
 A woman of a most prodigious spirit, 70
 In her effected.

Vit. Cor. Honourable my lord,
 It doth not suit a reverend cardinal
 To play the lawyer thus.

Mont. Oh, your trade instructs your language.—
 You see, my lords, what goodly fruit she seems;
 Yet, like those apples travellers report
 To grow where Sodom and Gomorrah stood,
 I will but touch her, and you straight shall see

She'll fall to soot and ashes.

80

Vit. Cor. Your envenomed
'Pothecary should do 't.

Mont. I am resolved ¹

Were there a second Paradise to lose
This devil would betray it.

Vit. Cor. Oh, poor charity,
Thou art seldom found in scarlet.

Mont. Who knows not how, when several night by
night

Her gates were choked with coaches, and her rooms
Outbraved the stars with several kind of lights ; 90
When she did counterfeit a prince's court
In music, banquets, and most riotous surfeits ?

Fr. Am. She hath lived ill.

Eng. Am. True ; but the cardinal's too bitter.

Fran. de Med. Your unhappy
Husband is dead.

Vit. Cor. Oh, he's a happy husband :
Now he owes nature nothing.

Fran. de Med. And by a vaulting-engine.

Mont. An active plot ; he jumped into his grave. 100

Fran. de Med. What a prodigy was 't
That from some two yards' height a slender man
Should break his neck !

Mont. I' the rushes !

Fran. de Med. And what's more,
Upon the instant lose all use of speech,
All vital motion, like a man had lain
Wound up ² three days. Now mark each circumstance.

¹ convinced.

² i. e. prepared for burial.

Mont. And look upon this creature was his wife.
 She comes not like a widow ; she comes armed 110
 With scorn and impudence : is this a mourning habit ?

Vit. Cor. Had I foreknown his death, as you suggest,
 I would have bespoke my mourning.

Mont. Oh, you are cunning.

Vit. Cor. You shame your wit and judgement
 To call it so. What ! is my just defence
 By him that is my judge called impudence ?
 Let me appeal then from this Christian court
 To the uncivil Tartar.

Mont. See, my lords, 120
 She scandals our proceedings.

Vit. Cor. Humbly thus,
 Thus low to the most worthy and respected
 Lieger ambassadors, my modesty
 And womanhood I tender ; but withal
 So entangled in a cursèd accusation
 That my defence, of force, like Perseus¹
 Must personate masculine virtue. To the point.
 Find me but guilty, sever head from body,
 We'll part good friends ; I scorn to hold my life 130
 At yours or any man's entreaty, sir.

Eng. Am. She hath a brave spirit.

Mont. Well, well, such counterfeit jewels
 Make true ones oft suspected.

Vit. Cor. You are deceived :
 For know that all your strict-combined heads
 Which strike against this mine of diamonds
 Shall prove but glassen hammers,—they shall break.
 These are but feigned shadows of my evils :

¹ The name 'Perseus' has no meaning here, and is probably a copyist's error.

Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils¹ ; 140
I am past such needless palsy.

Mont. Pray you, mistress, satisfy me one question:
Who lodged beneath your roof that fatal night
Your husband brake his neck ?

Brach. That question
Enforceth me break silence : I was there.

Mont. Your business ?

Brach. Why, I came to comfort her,
And take some course for settling her estate,
Because I heard her husband was in debt 150
To you, my lord.

Mont. He was.

Brach. And 'twas strangely feared
That you would cozen her.

Mont. Who made you overseer ?

Brach. Why, my charity, my charity, which should
flow
From every generous and noble spirit
To orphans and to widows.

Mont. Your lust.

Brach. Cowardly dogs bark loudest : sirrah priest, 160
I talk with you hereafter. Do you hear ?

Serv. My lord, your gown.

Brach. Thou liest, 'twas my stool :
Bestow 't upon thy master, that will challenge
The rest o' the household stuff ; for Brachiano
Was ne'er so beggarly to take a stool
Out of another's lodging. Let him make
Vallance for his bed on 't, or demy foot-cloth

¹ Borrowed from *Macbeth*, ii. 2.

For his most reverend mule: Monticelso

Nemo me impune lacessit.¹

[*Exit.* 170

Mont. Your champion's gone.

Vit. Cor. The wolf may prey the better.

Monticelso produces an incriminating letter from Brachiano to Vittoria.

Vit. Cor. Condemn you me for that the duke did love me!

So may you blame some fair and crystal river

For that some melancholic distracted man

Hath drowned himself in 't.

Mont. Truly drowned indeed.

Vit. Cor. Sum up my faults, I pray, and you shall find

That beauty, and gay clothes, a merry heart

And a good stomach to a feast, are all, 180

All the poor crimes that you can charge me with.

In faith, my lord, you might go pistol flies;

The sport would be more noble.

Mont. Very good.

Vit. Cor. But take you your course: it seems you have beggared me first

And now would fain undo me. I have houses,

Jewels, and a poor remnant of crusadoes²:

Would those would make you charitable.

Mont. If the devil

Did ever take good shape, behold his picture. 190

Vit. Cor. You have one virtue left,—

You will not flatter me.

Vittoria is condemned to imprisonment. Brachiano assists her to escape, and marries her. They take refuge in Brachiano's palace in Padua. Flamineo still continues to help his sister.

¹ 'No man provokes me with impunity.'

² A Portuguese gold coin, stamped on one side with a cross.

Marcello, who has inherited his mother's honesty, quarrels with him.

Lodovico, who had loved Isabella, determines to avenge her murder.

ACT V. SCENE II.—*An Apartment in a palace at Padua.*

[*Enter MARCELLO and CORNELIA.*]

Cor. I hear a whispering all about the court
You are to fight: who is your opposite?
What is the quarrel?

Mar. 'Tis an idle rumour.

Cor. Will you dissemble? sure, you do not well
To fright me thus: you never look thus pale,
But when you are most angry. I do charge you
Upon my blessing,—nay, I'll call the duke,
And he shall school you.

Mar. Publish not a fear 10
Which would convert to laughter: 'tis not so.
Was not this crucifix my father's?

Cor. Yes.

Mar. I have heard you say, giving my brother suck,
He took the crucifix between his hands,
And broke a limb off.

Cor. Yes; but 'tis mended.

[*Enter FLAMINEO.*]

Flam. I have brought your weapon back.

[*Runs MARCELLO through.*]

Cor. Ha! O my horror!

Mar. You have brought it home, indeed. 20

Cor. Help! Oh, he's murdered!

Flam. Do you turn your gall up? I'll to sanctuary,
And send a surgeon to you. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter CARLO, HORTENSIO, and PEDRO.*]

Hort. How ! o' the ground !

Mar. O mother, now remember what I told
Of breaking of the crucifix ! Farewell.
There are some sins which Heaven doth duly punish
In a whole family. This it is to rise
By all dishonest means ! Let all men know,
That tree shall long time keep a steady foot 30
Whose branches spread no wider than the root.

[*Dies.*]

Cor. Oh, my perpetual sorrow !

Hort. Virtuous Marcello !
He's dead.—Pray, leave him, lady : come, you shall.

Cor. Alas, he is not dead ; he's in a trance. Why,
here's nobody shall get anything by his death. Let me
call him again, for God's sake !

Car. I would you were deceived.

Cor. Oh, you abuse me, you abuse me, you abuse me !
How many have gone away thus, for lack of tendance !
Rear up's head, rear up's head : his bleeding inward will
kill him. 42

Hort. You see he is departed.

Cor. Let me come to him ; give me him as he is : if he
be turned to earth, let me but give him one hearty kiss,
and you shall put us both into one coffin. Fetch a looking
glass ; see if his breath will not stain it : or pull out
some feathers from my pillow, and lay them to his lips.
Will you lose him for a little pains-taking ?

Hort. Your kindest office is to pray for him. 50

Cor. Alas, I would not pray for him yet. He may live
to lay me i' the ground, and pray for me, if you'll let me
come to him.

[Enter BRACHIANO all armed save the beaver, with FLAMINEO, FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS, LODOVICO, and Page.]

Brach. Was this your handiwork ?

Flam. It was my misfortune.

Cor. He lies, he lies ; he did not kill him : these have killed him that would not let him be better looked to.

Brach. Have comfort, my grieved mother.

Cor. Oh, you screech-owl !

Hort. Forbear, good madam.

60

Cor. Let me go, let me go.

[*She runs to FLAMINEO with her knife drawn, and, coming to him, lets it fall.*]

The God of Heaven forgive thee ! Dost not wonder
I pray for thee ? I'll tell thee what 's the reason :
I have scarce breath to number twenty minutes ;
I'd not spend that in cursing. Fare thee well :
Half of thyself lies there ; and mayst thou live
To fill an hour-glass with his mouldered ashes,
To tell how thou shouldst spend the time to come
In blest repentance !

Brach. Mother, pray tell me

70

How came he by his death ? what was the quarrel ?

Cor. Indeed, my younger boy presumed too much
Upon his manhood, gave him bitter words,
Drew his sword first ; and so, I know not how,
For I was out of my wits, he fell with 's head
Just in my bosom.

Page. This is not true, madam.

Cor. I pray thee, peace,
One arrow 's grazed already : it were vain
To lose this for that will ne'er be found again.

80

Brach. Go, bear the body to Cornelia's lodging :
And we command that none acquaint our duchess

With this sad accident. For you, Flamineo,
Hark you, I will not grant your pardon.

Flam. No?

Brach. Only a lease of your life; and that shall last
But for one day; thou shalt be forced each evening
To renew it, or be hanged.

Flam. At your pleasure.

[*LODOVICO sprinkles BRACHIANO's beaver with a poison.*
Your will is law now, I'll not meddle with it. 90

Brach. You once did brave me in your sister's lodging;
I'll now keep you in awe for 't.—Where's our beaver?

Fram. de Med. (aside). He calls for his destruction.

Noble youth,
I pity thy sad fate! Now to the barriers.
This shall his passage to the black lake further;
The last good deed he did, he pardoned murder.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE III.—*The Lists at Padua.*

*Charges and shouts. They fight at barriers¹; first single
pairs, then three to three.*

[*Enter BRACHIANO, VITTORIA COROMBONA, GIOVANNI,
FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS, FLAMINEO, with others.*]

Brach. An armourer! ud's death, an armourer!

Flam. Armourer! where's the armourer?

Brach. Tear off my beaver.

Flam. Are you hurt, my lord?

Brach. Oh, my brain's on fire!

[*Enter Armourer.*]

The helmet is poisoned.

Armourer. My lord, upon my soul,—

Brach. Away with him to torture!

¹ i. e. in lists: the French *Jeu de Barres*.

There are some great ones that have hand in this,
And near about me. 10

Vit. Cor. Oh, my loved lord! poisoned!

Flam. Remove the bar. Here's unfortunate revels!
Call the physicians.

[*Enter two Physicians.*]

A plague upon you!

We have too much of your cunning here already:
I fear the ambassadors are likewise poisoned.

Brach. Oh, I am gone already! the infection
Flies to the brain and heart. Oh, thou strong heart!
There's such a covenant 'tween the world and it,
They're loath to break.

Giov. Oh, my most loved father! 20

Brach. Remove the boy away.—

Where's this good woman?—Had I infinite worlds,
They were too little for thee: must I leave thee?—
What say you, screech-owls, is the venom mortal?

1st Phys. Most deadly.

Brach. Most corrupted politic hangman,
You kill without book; but your art to save
Fails you as oft as great men's needy friends.
I that have given life to offending slaves
And wretched murderers, have I not power 30
To lengthen mine own a twelvemonth?—
Do not kiss me, for I shall poison thee.
This unction's sent from the great Duke of Florence.

Fran. de Med. Sir, be of comfort.

Brach. Oh, thou soft natural death, thou art joint-twin
To sweetest slumber! no rough-bearded comet
Stares on thy mild departure; the dull owl
Beats not against thy casement; the hoarse wolf
Scents not thy carrion: pity winds thy corse,
Whilst horror waits on princes. 40

Vit. Cor. I am lost for ever.

Brach. How miserable a thing it is to die
'Mongst women howling !

[*Enter LODOVICO and GASPARO, in the habit of Capuchins.*]

What are those ?

Flam. Franciscans :

They have brought the extreme unction.

Brach. On pain of death, let no man name death to me :
It is a word infinitely terrible.
Withdraw into our cabinet.

[*Exeunt all except FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS and FLAMINEO.*]

Flam. To see what solitariness is about dying princes !
as heretofore they have unpeopled towns, divorced friends,
and made great houses unhospitable, so now, O justice !
where are their flatterers now ? Flatterers are but the
shadows of princes' bodies ; the least thick cloud makes
them invisible. 54

Fran. de Med. There's great moan made for him.

Flam. Faith, for some few hours salt-water will run
most plentifully in every office o' the court : but, believe
it, most of them do but weep over their stepmothers'
graves.

Fran. de Med. How mean you ? 60

Flam. Why, they dissemble ; as some men do that live
within compass o' the verge.

Fran. de Med. Come, you have thrived well under him.

Flam. Faith, like a wolf in a woman's breast ; I have
been fed with poultry : but, for money, understand me,
I had as good a will to cozen him as e'er an officer of
them all ; but I had not cunning enough to do it.

Fran. de Med. What didst thou think of him ? faith,
speak freely. 69

Flam. He was a kind of statesman that would sooner

have reckoned how many cannon-bullets he had discharged against a town, to count his expense that way, than how many of his valiant and deserving subjects he lost before it.

Fran. de Med. Oh, speak well of the duke.

Flam. I have done. Wilt hear some of my court-wisdom? To reprehend princes is dangerous; and to over-commend some of them is palpable lying.

Re-enter LODOVICO.

Fran. de Med. How is it with the duke?

Lod. Most deadly ill.

80

He's fall'n into a strange distraction:

He talks of battles and monopolies,

Levyng of taxes; and from that descends

To the most brain-sick language. His mind fastens

On twenty several objects, which confound

Deep sense with folly. Such a fearful end

May teach some men that bear too lofty crest,

Though they live happiest, yet they die not best.

He hath conferred the whole state of the dukedom

Upon your sister, till the prince arrive

90

At mature age.

[*Re-enter* VITTORIA COROMBONA, FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS,
FLAMINEO, and Attendants.]

Lod. My lords, he's dead.

Omnes. Rest to his soul!

Vit. Cor. O me! this place is hell!

[*Exit.*

Fran. de Med. How heavily she takes it!

Flam. O yes, yes;

Had women navigable rivers in their eyes,

They would dispend them all: surely, I wonder

Why we should wish more rivers to the city,

When they sell water so good cheap. I'll tell thee, 100

These are but moonish shades of griefs or fears ;
 There's nothing sooner dry than women's tears.
 Why, here's an end of all my harvest ; he has given me
 nothing.

Court promises ! let wise men count them cursed,
 For while you live, he that scores best pays worst.

Fran. de Med. Sure, this was Florence' doing.

Flam. Very likely.

Those are found weighty strokes which come from the
 hand,

But those are killing strokes which come from the head.

Oh, the rare tricks of a Machiavelian ! 110

He doth not come, like a gross plodding slave,
 And buffet you to death : no, my quaint knave,
 He tickles you to death, makes you die laughing,
 As if you had swallowed down a pound of saffron.

You see the feat, 'tis practised in a trice ;

To teach court honesty, it jumps on ice.

Fran. de Med. Now have the people liberty to talk,
 And descant on his vices.

Flam. Misery of princes,

That must of force be censured by their slaves ! 120

Not only blamed for doing things are ill,

But for not doing all that all men will :

One were better be a thresher.

Ud's death, I would fain speak with this duke yet.

Fran. de Med. Now he's dead ?

Flam. I cannot conjure ; but if prayers or oaths
 Will get to the speech of him, though forty devils
 Wait on him in his livery of flames,

I'll speak to him, and shake him by the hand,

Though I be blasted. [*Exit.* 130

Flamineseo, tired of serving Vittoria, determines to claim his
 reward.

ACT V. SCENE VI.—*An Apartment in VITTORIA'S House.*

[*Enter VITTORIA COROMBONA with a book in her hand, and ZANCHE; FLAMINEO following them.*]

Flam. What, are you at your prayers? give o'er.

Vit. Cor. How, ruffian!

Flam. I come to you 'bout worldly business:

Sit down, sit down:—nay, stay, blouze, you may hear it:—

The doors are fast enough.

Vit. Cor. Ha, are you drunk?

Flam. Yes, yes, with wormwood-water: you shall taste

Some of it presently.

Vit. Cor. What intends the Fury?

Flam. You are my lord's executrix; and I claim 10
Reward for my long service.

Vit. Cor. For your service!

Flam. Come, therefore, here is pen and ink; set down
What you will give me.

Vit. Cor. There.

[*Writes.*]

Flam. Ha! have you done already?

'Tis a most short conveyance.

Vit. Cor. I will read it:

[*Reads.*]

'I give that portion to thee, and no other,
Which Cain groaned under, having slain his brother.' 20

Flam. A most courtly patent to beg by!

Vit. Cor. You are a villain.

Flam. Is't come to this? They say, affrights cure
agues:

Thou hast a devil in thee; I will try

If I can scare him from thee. Nay, sit still:

My lord hath left me yet two case of jewels
Shall make me scorn your bounty ; you shall see them.

[*Exit.*

Vit. Cor. Sure, he's distracted.

Zanche. Oh, he's desperate :

For your own safety give him gentle language. 30

[*Re-enter FLAMINEO with two case of pistols.*]

Flam. Look, these are better far at a dead lift
Than all your jewel-house.

Vit. Cor. And yet, methinks,
These stones have no air lustre, they are ill set.

Flam. I'll turn the right side towards you ; you shall
see
How they will sparkle.

Vit. Cor. Turn this horror from me !
What do you want ? what would you have me do ?
Is not all mine yours ? have I any children ?

Flam. Pray thee, good woman, do not trouble me 40
With this vain worldly business ; say your prayers :
I made a vow to my deceased lord,
Neither yourself nor I should outlive him
The numbering of four hours.

Vit. Cor. Did he enjoin it ?

Flam. He did ; and 'twas a deadly jealousy,
Lest any should enjoy thee after him,
That urged him vow me to it. For my death,
I did propound it voluntarily, knowing,
If he could not be safe in his own court, 50
Being a great duke, what hope, then, for us ?

Vit. Cor. This is your melancholy and despair.

Flam. Away !
Fool thou art to think that politicians
Do use to kill the effects of injuries

And let the cause live. Shall we groan in irons,
Or be a shameful and a weighty burden
To a public scaffold ? This is my resolve ;
I would not live at any man's entreaty,
Nor die at any's bidding. 60

Vit. Cor. Will you hear me ?

Flam. My life hath done service to other men ;
My death shall serve mine own turn. Make you ready.

Vit. Cor. Do you mean to die indeed ?

Flam. With as much pleasure
As e'er my father gat me.

Vit. Cor. Are the doors locked ?

Zanche. Yes, madam.

Vit. Cor. Are you grown an atheist ? will you turn
your body,

Which is the goodly palace of the soul, 70
To the soul's slaughter-house ? Oh, the cursèd devil,
Which doth present us with all other sins
Thrice-candied o'er ; despair with gall and stibium ;
Yet we carouse it off ;—Cry out for help !—

[*Aside to ZANCHE.*

Makes us forsake that which was made for man,
The world, to sink to that was made for devils,
Eternal darkness !

Zanche. Help, help !

Flam. I'll stop your throat

With winter-plums. 80

Vit. Cor. I prithee, yet remember,
Millions are now in graves, which at last day
Like mandrakes shall rise shrieking.

Flam. Leave your prating,
For these are but grammatical laments,
Feminine arguments : and they move me,
As some in pulpits move their auditory,

More with their exclamation than sense
Of reason or sound doctrine.

Zanche (*aside to VIT.*). Gentle madam,
Seem to consent, only persuade him teach
The way to death ; let him die first.

90

Vit. Cor. 'Tis good. I apprehend it,
To kill one's self is meat that we must take
Like pills, not chew 't, but quickly swallow it ;
The smart o' the wound, or weakness of the hand,
May else bring treble torments.

Flam. I have held it
A wretched and most miserable life
Which is not able to die.

100

Vit. Cor. Oh, but frailty !
Yet I am now resolved : farewell, affliction !
Behold, Brachiano, I that while you lived
Did make a flaming altar of my heart
To sacrifice unto you, now am ready
To sacrifice heart and all.—Farewell, *Zanche* !

Zanche. How, madam ! do you think that I'll outlive
you ;
Especially when my best self, *Flamimeo*,
Goes the same voyage ?

Flam. Oh, most loved Moor !

110

Zanche. Only by all my love let me entreat you,—
Since it is most necessary one of us
Do violence on ourselves,—let you or I
Be her sad taster, teach her how to die.

Flam. Thou dost instruct me nobly : take these
pistols,
Because my hand is stained with blood already :
Two of these you shall level at my breast,
The other 'gainst your own, and so we'll die
Most equally contented : but first swear

Not to outlive me.

120

Vit. Cor. and Zanche. Most religiously.

Flam. Then here's an end of me ; farewell, daylight !
And, Oh contemptible physic, that dost take
So long a study, only to preserve
So short a life, I take my leave of thee !—
These are two cupping-glasses that shall draw

[*Showing the pistols.*

All my infected blood out. Are you ready ?

Vit. Cor. and Zanche. Ready.

128

Flam. Whither shall I go now ? O Lucian, thy
ridiculous purgatory¹ ! to find Alexander the Great
cobbling shoes, Pompey tagging points, and Julius
Cæsar making hair-buttons ! Hannibal selling blacking,
and Augustus crying garlic ! Charlemagne selling lists
by the dozen, and King Pepin crying apples in a cart
drawn with one horse !

Whether I resolve to fire, earth, water, air,
Or all the elements by scruples, I know not,
Nor greatly care.—Shoot, shoot :

Of all deaths the violent death is best ;

For from ourselves it steals ourselves so fast,

140

The pain, once apprehended, is quite past.

[*They shoot : he falls ; and they run to him, and
tread upon him.*

Vit. Cor. What, are you dropt ?

Flam. I am mixed with earth already : as you are
noble,

Perform your vows, and bravely follow me.

Vit. Cor. Whither ? to hell ?

Zanche. To most assured damnation ?

Vit. Cor. Oh, thou most cursèd devil !

Zanche. Thou art caught—

¹ See Lucian, *True History*, ii. 14, &c.

Vit. Cor. In thine own engine. I tread the fire out
That would have been my ruin. 150

Flam. Will you be perjured? what a religious oath
was Styx, that the gods never durst swear by, and
violate! Oh, that we had such an oath to minister, and
to be so well kept in our courts of justice!

Vit. Cor. Think whither thou art going.

Zanche. And remember
What villanies thou hast acted.

Vit. Cor. This thy death
Shall make me like a blazing ominous star:
Look up and tremble. 160

Flam. Oh, I am caught with a springe!

Vit. Cor. You see the fox comes many times short
home;

'Tis here proved true.

Flam. Killed with a couple of braches¹!

Vit. Cor. No fitter offering for the infernal Furies
Than one in whom they reigned while he was living.

Flam. Oh, the way's dark and horrid! I cannot see:
Shall I have no company?

Vit. Cor. O yes, thy sins
Do run before thee to fetch fire from hell, 170
To light thee thither.

Flam. Wilt thou outlive me?

Zanche. Yes, and drive a stake
Through thy body; for we'll give it out
Thou didst this violence upon thyself.

Flam. Oh, cunning devils! now I have tried your love,
And doubled all your reaches.—I am not wounded;
[Rises.

The pistols held no bullets: 'twas a plot
To prove your kindness to me; and I live

¹ hounds.

To punish your ingratitude. I knew, 190
 One time or other, you would find a way
 To give me a strong potion.—O men
 That lie upon your death-beds, and are haunted
 With howling wives, ne'er trust them ! they'll re-marry
 Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider
 Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.—
 How cunning you were to discharge ! do you practise
 at the Artillery-yard ?—Trust a woman ! never, never !
 Brachiano be my precedent. We lay our souls to pawn
 to the devil for a little pleasure, and a woman makes the
 bill of sale. That ever man should marry ! For one
 Hypermnestra¹ that saved her lord and husband, forty-
 nine of her sisters cut their husbands' throats all in one
 night : there was a shoal of virtuous horse-leeches !—
 Here are two other instruments. 195

Vit. Cor. Help, help !

[*Enter LODOVICO, GASPARO, PEDRO, and CARLO.*]

Flam. What noise is that ? ha ! false keys i' the
 court !

Lod. We have brought you a masque.

Flam. A matachin², it seems by your drawn swords.
 Churchmen turned revellers ! 200

Carlo. Isabella ! Isabella !

Lod. Do you know us now ?

Flam. Lodovico ! and Gasparo !

Lod. Yes ; and that Moor the duke gave pension to
 Was the great Duke of Florence.

Vit. Cor. Oh, we are lost !

Flam. You shall not take justice from forth my
 hands,—

¹ Danaus commanded his fifty daughters to murder their husbands. Hypermnestra alone refused. See Ovid, *Heroides*, xiv.

² A dance in which the performers fenced with each other.

Oh, let me kill her!—I'll cut my safety
 Through your coats of steel. Fate's a spaniel,
 We cannot beat it from us. What remains now? 210
 Let all that do ill, take this precedent,—
 Man may his fate foresee, but not prevent:
 And of all axioms this shall win the prize,—
 'Tis better to be fortunate than wise.

Gas. Bind him to the pillar.

Vit. Cor. Oh, your gentle pity!
 I have seen a blackbird that would sooner fly
 To a man's bosom, than to stay¹ the gripe
 Of the fierce sparrowhawk.

Gas. Your hope deceives you. 220

Vit. Cor. If Florence be i' the court, would he would
 kill me!

Gas. Fool! princes give rewards with their own
 hands,

But death or punishment by the hands of others.

Lod. Sirrah, you once did strike me: I'll strike you
 Into the centre.

Flam. Thou'lt do it like a hangman, a base hangman,
 Not like a noble fellow: for thou see'st
 I cannot strike again.

Lod. Dost laugh?

Flam. Would'st have me die, as I was born, in
 whining? 230

Gas. Recommend yourself to Heaven.

Flam. No, I will carry mine own commendations
 thither.

Lod. Oh, could I kill you forty times a day,
 And use't four year together, 'twere too little!
 Naught grieves but that you are too few to feed
 The famine of our vengeance. What dost think on?

¹ await.

Flam. Nothing ; of nothing : leave thy idle questions.
I am i' the way to study a long silence :
To prate were idle. I remember nothing.
There's nothing of so infinite vexation 240
As man's own thoughts.

Lod. (to Vittoria). Oh, thou hast been a most prodigious
comet,
But I'll cut off your train,—kill the Moor first.

Vit. Cor. You shall not kill her first ; behold my
breast :
I will be waited on in death ; my servant
Shall never go before me.

Gas. Are you so brave ?

Vit. Cor. Yes, I shall welcome death
As princes do some great ambassadors ;
I'll meet thy weapon half-way. 250

Lod. Thou dost tremble :
Methinks fear should dissolve thee into air.

Vit. Cor. Oh, thou art deceived, I am too true a woman :
Conceit¹ can never kill me. I'll tell thee what,
I will not in my death shed one base tear ;
Or if look pale, for want of blood, not fear.

Carlo. Thou art my task, black Fury.

Zanche. I have blood
As red as either of theirs : wilt drink some ?
'Tis good for the falling-sickness. I am proud 260
Death cannot alter my complexion,
For I shall ne'er look pale.

Lod. Strike, strike,
With a joint motion.

[*They stab VITTORIA, ZANCHE, and FLAMINEO.*]

Vit. Cor. 'Twas a manly blow :
The next thou giv'st, murder some sucking infant ;

¹ Imagination.

And then thou wilt be famous.

Flam. Oh, what blade is 't?

A Toledo, or an English fox¹?

I ever thought a cutler should distinguish 270
The cause of my death, rather than a doctor.
Search my wound deeper; tent² it with the steel
That made it.

Vit. Cor. Oh, my greatest sin lay in my blood!
Now my blood pays for 't.

Flam. Thou 'rt a noble sister!

I love thee now: if woman do breed man,
She ought to teach him manhood: fare thee well.
Know, many glorious women that are famed 280
For masculine virtue have been vicious,
Only a happier silence did betide them:
She hath no faults who hath the art to hide them.

Vit. Cor. My soul, like to a ship in a black storm,
Is driven, I know not whither.

Flam. Then cast anchor.

Prosperity doth bewitch men, seeming clear;
But seas do laugh, show white, when rocks are near.
We cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,
Nay, cease to die, by dying. Art thou gone?
And thou so near the bottom? false report, 290
Which says that women vie with the nine Muses
For nine tough durable lives! I do not look
Who went before, nor who shall follow me;
No, at myself I will begin and end.
While we look up to Heaven, we confound
Knowledge with knowledge. Oh, I am in a mist!

Vit. Cor. Oh, happy they that never saw the court,

¹ Toledo was famous for sword-blades. 'Fox' is a colloquial term for a sword.

² probe.

Nor ever knew great men but by report ! [Dies.

Flam. I recover like a spent taper, for a flash, and instantly go out. Let all that belong to great men remember the old wives' tradition, to be like the lions i' the Tower on Candlemas-day: to mourn if the sun shine, for fear of the pitiful remainder of winter to come.¹ 303

'Tis well yet there's some goodness in my death ;
My life was a black charnel. . . . Farewell, glorious
villains !

This busy trade of life appears most vain,
Since rest breeds rest, where all seek pain by pain.
Let no harsh flattering bells resound my knell ;
Strike, thunder, and strike loud, to my farewell !

[Dies.

Eng. Am. (within). This way, this way ! break open
the doors ! this way ! 310

Lod. Ha ! are we betrayed ?

Why, then let's constantly die all together ;
And having finished this most noble deed,
Defy the worst of fate, nor fear to bleed.

[Enter Ambassadors and GIOVANNI.]

Eng. Am. Keep back the prince : shoot, shoot.

[They shoot, and LODOVICO falls.

Lod. Oh, I am wounded !

I fear I shall be ta'en.

Gio. You bloody villains,

By what authority have you committed

This massacre ? 320

¹ It was a common superstition that a fine Candlemas (February 2) meant a return of winter. See Hone's *Every Day Book*, s. v. Candlemas. The phrase about 'Lions in the Tower' refers to the practice of keeping there the lions which were from time to time presented to the English sovereign. See Hone, Vol. I, p. 1006.

Lod. By thine.

Gio. Mine !

Lod. Yes ; thy uncle,

Which is a part of thee, enjoined us to't :

Thou know'st me, I am sure ; I am Count Lodowick ;

And thy most noble uncle in disguise

Was last night in thy court.

Gio. Ha !

Carlo. Yes, that Moor

Thy father chose his pensioner.

330

Gio. He turned murderer !—

Away with them to prison and to torture !

All that have hands in this shall taste our justice,

As I hope Heaven.

Lod. I do glory yet

That I can call this act mine own. For my part,

The rack, the gallows, and the torturing wheel,

Shall be but sound sleeps to me ; here's my rest ;

I limned this night-piece, and it was my best.

Gio. Remove the bodies.—See, my honoured lords, 340

What use you ought make of their punishment :

Let guilty men remember, their black deeds

Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds.

[*Exeunt.*]

II
COMEDIES

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

IN the earliest English drama Comedy was for the most part merely episodical: a few lines of jest to amuse the groundlings and to bribe their attention for the more serious portion of the play. This is, of course, in accord with their ecclesiastical origin and their religious topics: the naïve irreverence of treatment, which many of them exhibit, left the main course of the story untouched and spent itself on interpolated tags and bouts of farcical by-play. But to this rule there is one important exception. The Towneley *Secunda Pastorum*, which closes on a representation of the Nativity as tender and sweet as a Christmas Carol, opens with an entire act of pure Comedy, over eight hundred lines in length, and distinguished by a definite plot and even some rudimentary attempt at characterization. There is no need to discuss here the vexed question as to the relation of forepiece and afterpiece, it is with the forepiece alone that we are concerned, and this can stand by itself with an independence almost as complete as that of its French contemporaries the *Farce du Cuvier* and the *Farce de Pathelin*.

It is focussed on two among the most time-honoured of comic themes, the shrewish wife and the cunning and humorous robber. Much of the fun is primitive and elementary — Mak's offer to be searched, his lame excuse, his pretended solicitude for Gill, with whom he has just been quarrelling, the stolen sheep hidden in the cradle, the shepherds seeking their own and reviled as housebreakers for

doing so—but it is all presented with a gay and innocent cheerfulness which carries our interest and enlists our good will. It has, too, its tiny points of genuine drama. Mak, impudently secure in the ingenuity of his trick, wishes that he had been present when the theft was committed: ‘some,’ he says, ‘should have bought it full sore’; and at once the shepherds feel that he has overshot the mark and that his protestations are growing suspicious. They leave the cottage baffled and unsuccessful, pause outside the door in fear that they have been unneighbourly, return to give the child a sixpence which they can ill spare, and in the very act of charity unmask the impostor. Not less diverting is Gill’s distribution of the parts:—‘You sing Lullay,’ she says to her husband, ‘while I groan’; and on this remarkable duet the shepherds enter. It is all comedy of the lightest and most farcical kind, but it is never dull, it never hangs fire, and our only regret on reading it is that it no longer holds the stage.

The Towneley Miracle plays from which this example is taken date probably from the reign of Henry VI or Edward IV, and seem to have belonged to the Abbey of Woodkirk, about four miles from Wakefield. It will be observed that this country is the scene in which this comedy is laid, and that the shepherds are summoned to Bethlehem from their Yorkshire moorland. There appears to be no doubt that the Towneley plays (of which thirty-two are extant) were originally composed in English, and that they were given not only in the Abbey, but at the Guild pageants of Wakefield as well. The language throughout is racy and idiomatic, it contains many proverbial phrases, and it turns to full account our national love of rhyme and alliteration. On all grounds they are peculiarly suitable specimens of our early dramatic literature.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

The three shepherds are watching their flocks on a bitter December night. As they talk Mak joins them. After some rough jesting the shepherds fling themselves down by the fold, and are soon asleep. Mak at once takes advantage of the opportunity to steal a fine sheep which he carries home to his wife, Gill. He leaves the sheep with her, and slips back to his place before the others are awake. Gradually they arise one by one, only Mak is apparently sound asleep. When they rouse him, he complains that he has had a terrible dream, and that he is certain his wife is very ill.

Mak. I must go home, by your leave, to Gill as I thought.
I pray you look my sleeve that I steal naught ;
I am loath you to grieve, or from you take aught. [*Exit.*

3 Pastor. Go forth, ill might thou chefe¹. Now would
I we sought

This morne

That we had all our store.

1 Pastor. But I will go before ;
Let us meet.

2 Pastor. Where ?

3 Pastor. At the crooked thorn. [*Exit all three.* 10

The scene changes to a space before Mak's house.

Enter MAK.

Mak. Undo this door. Who is here ? How long shall
I stand ?

Uxor eius. Who makes such a bere² ? now walk in the
wenyand³ !

¹ ill befall you.

² clamour.

³ i.e. bad luck to you. It was held that the waning moon brought ill luck.

Mak. Ah Gill, what cheer? it is I Mak, your husband.

Gill lets him in, grumbling the while. He leaves her to do the house-work, and rambles about all night, she says. She asks how he left the shepherds.

Mak. The last word that they said when I turned my back

They would look that they had their sheep, all the pack.
I hope they will not be well paid when they their sheep lack,

Perde

But how-so the game goes

To me they will suppose ¹

And make a foul noise

20

And cry out upon me.

But thou must do as thou hight ².

Uxor. I accord me there-till ³

I shall swaddle him right in my cradle.

If it were a greater slight yet could I help till ⁴

I will lie down straight; come hap ⁵ me.

Mak. I will.

Uxor. Behind

Come Coll ⁶ and his maroo ⁷;

They will nip us full narrow.

30

Mak. But I may cry out haroo ⁸

The sheep if they find.

Uxor. Harken aye, when they call; they will come anon.

Come and make ready all, and sing by thine own ⁹;

Sing lullay thou shall, for I must groan

¹ i. e. they will suspect me. ² promised. ³ I consent.

⁴ If it were a more cunning trick still I could help in it.

⁵ cover.

⁶ The name of the first shephed; cf. p. 157.¹

⁷ comrade (literally 'mate').

⁸ A Norman expression (still used in Jersey) meaning 'to cry out for help', or 'to raise a hue and cry'.

⁹ to thyself.

And cry out by the wall on Mary and John

Full sore.

Sing lullay on fast

When thou hearest at last ;

And but I play a false cast ¹

40

Trust me no more.

[*Exit both.*]

The scene changes back to the moor again.

3 *Pastor.* Ah Coll, good morn. Why sleepest thou not ?

1 *Pastor.* Alas that ever was I born ! we have a foul blot.

A fat wether have we lorn.

3 *Pastor.* Marry, God forbot.

2 *Pastor.* Who should do us that scorn ? that were
a foul spot ².

1 *Pastor.* Some shrew.

I have sought with my dogs

All Horberry Shroggs ³

And of fifteen hogs ⁴

50

Found I but one ewe.

3 *Pastor.* Now trow me if ye will ; by Saint Thomas of
Kent

Either Mak or Gill was at that assent ⁵.

1 *Pastor.* Peace man, be still. I saw when he went.

Thou slanderest him ill ; thou ought to repent

Good speed.

2 *Pastor.* Now as ever might I the ⁶

If I should even here die

I would say it were he

That did that same deed.

60

¹ trick.

² jest (the German *Spott*).

³ Horberry is a village near Wakefield ; 'shroggs' are patches
of rough ground partly covered with brushwood.

⁴ young sheep.

⁵ i. e. had a hand in that.

⁶ thrive.

3 *Pastor*. Go we thither I reed¹ and run on our feet,
Shall I never eat bread the sooth till I wit.

The shepherds go to Mak's house, and call to him.

Mak. Who is that spake as it were nine
On loft²?

Who is that, I say.

3 *Pastor*. Good fellows, were it day³.

Mak. As far as ye may
Good, speak soft

Over a sick-woman's head that is at mal-ease
I had liefer be dead or she had any disease⁴. 70

After a little more talk, the third Shepherd tells Mak of their loss.

Mak. Had I been there
Some should have bought it full sore.

1 *Pastor*. Marry, some men trow that ye were,
And that us forthinks⁵.

2 *Pastor*. Mak, some men trow that it should be ye.

3 *Pastor*. Either ye or your spouse, so say we.

Mak. Now if ye have suspouse⁶ to Gill or to me
Come in our house, and then may ye see
Who had her.

If I any sheep fott⁷ 80
Either cow or stott⁸,
And Gill, my wife, rose not
Here since she lade her.

The shepherds search the house, and find nothing. Before they leave they stop to speak a kindly word to Gill, who lies groaning, and to the baby who is covered up in the cradle. Then they go out, but pause outside the house.

¹ advise.

² on high : Mak's house is in a hollow.

³ i. e. if you could see us.

⁴ injury.

⁵ seems ill to us

⁶ suspicion.

⁷ fetched.

⁸ a young bullock.

1 *Pastor*. Gave ye the child anything ?

2 *Pastor*. I trow not one farthing.

3 *Pastor*. Fast again will I fling ;

Abide ye me there. [*He goes back to the house.*]

Mak, take it no grief¹ if I come to thy barne².

Mak. Nay, thou dost me great reprove³, and foul hast thou farne⁴.

3 *Pastor*. The child it will not grieve, that little day-starne⁵. 90

Mak, with your leave, let me give your barne

But six-pence.

Mak. Nay, do way⁶ ; he sleeps.

3 *Pastor*. Methinks he peeps.

Mak. When he wakens he weeps ;

I pray you go hence. [*The other shepherds come back.*]

3 *Pastor*. Give me leave him to kiss, and lift up the clout.

What the devil is this ? he has a long snout.

1 *Pastor*. He is marked amiss ; we wait ill about.

2 *Pastor*. Ill-spun weft i-wis, aye comes foul out. 100

Aye so.

He is like to our sheep.

1 *Pastor*. How Gib, may I peep ?

2 *Pastor*. I trow kind will creep

Where it may not go.

3 *Pastor*. I know him by the ear-mark ; that is a good token.

Mak. I tell you, sirs, hark ! his nose is broken ;

Since told me a clerk that he was for spoken⁷.

¹ take it not amiss.

² child.

³ reproach.

⁴ done.

⁵ day-star.

⁶ go away.

⁷ bewitched.

1 *Pastor*. This is a false work ; I would fain be
wroken¹ ; 110

Get weeping.

Uxor. He was taken with² an elf ;
I saw it myself ;
When the clock struck twelve
Was he forshapen³.

8 *Pastor*. Sirs, do my reed ;
For this trespass
We will neither ban⁴ nor flyte⁵,
Fight nor chyte⁶,
But have done as tyte⁷ 120
And cast him in canvas.

[*They toss MAX in a sheet.*]

After this, the play goes on to the ordinary representation of the Christmas story.

¹ revenged.

² by.

³ misshapen.

⁴ curse.

⁵ miscall.

⁶ scold.

⁷ at once : a northern dialectical form.

CHAPTER II

SCHOLASTIC COMEDY

THE experiment of the *Secunda Pastorum* does not appear to have been repeated: at any rate we have no later example of a Miracle play in which the comic spirit predominates. But in the course of the next half-century two influences began to concentrate upon the English stage and to exercise an important effect on its character and progress. The first was satire. Our Tudor period was a time of corruption within the Church and of controversy without; there were at least as many evils to amend as there had been in the days of *Piers Ploughman*; and while the reformer battered at the doors of the stronghold, the poet, secure behind the protection of his craft, showered arrow after arrow at the common enemy. The most remarkable instance of this tendency is to be found in the Interludes of John Heywood, the first of which appeared somewhere about 1520. Heywood was a devout Roman Catholic and a staunch upholder of the Constitution, but he had a keen wit and an abundant opportunity for burlesque and epigram. His *Merry Play between the Pardoner, the Friar, the Curate, and Neighbour Pratt* (1520-1) satirized the greed and rapacity of the wandering clergy; the domestic confessor is lashed in the *Merry Play between John the Husband, Tib the Wife, and Sir John the Priest*; most famous of all is the *Interlude of the Four P's* (about 1545), in which Palmer, Pardoner, and 'Poticary vie with one another in the effrontery of their

pretensions, and the Pedlar judges which is the greatest liar of the three.

The second influence was Humanism and the revival of classical learning. We have already noted the effect of this upon English tragedy¹; in comedy its range was even wider, and its result more durable. Early in the sixteenth century it became customary for the Universities and the larger schools to perform classical comedies on festival-days: examples from Plautus, from Terence, and even from Aristophanes are attested by contemporary records between the years 1527 and 1537, and the fashion so established rapidly spread into general usage. From production to imitation was but a short step. About the same period Ravisius Textor, Professor of Rhetoric at Paris, began to write Latin farces, one of which, the amusing burlesque of *Thersites*, was translated into English in 1537; and thenceforward the two streams intermingled in the works of Heywood and Ingelend and others, ranging from the harlequinade of *Jack Juggler* to the faint romance of *Calisto and Meliboea*, until, shortly after 1550, they merged into the two plays with whose almost simultaneous production our English comedy attained its adolescence.

It is noticeable that though both are of academic origin, and could only have been written by men of academic training and condition, yet both have advanced beyond the practice of reliance upon classical topics. *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, ascribed to William Stevenson², who from 1550 to 1553 was master of the pageants at Christ's College, Cambridge, is a rustic sketch, treating of village life as seen from the class-room window; its whole plot

¹ See above, p. 84.

² Its attribution to John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells, is now commonly discredited. The title-page bears only the indication 'Mr. S. Master of Arts'.

turns on the interruption of a housewife's needle-work, and it even aims at some contemporary portraiture in the use of dialect and of clownish catch-words. *Ralph Roister Doister*, written by Nicholas Udall (probably during his headmastership of Westminster), is no doubt asserted by some historians to be founded on the *Miles Gloriosus*; but its main resemblance to that play is comprised in the fact that one of its characters is a braggart and another a parasite. Each, in short, while essentially scholastic in its outlook, in its form, and in the quality of its humour, is of English parentage, and owes but little of its substance to any remoter ancestry.

Of the two *Ralph Roister Doister* is undoubtedly the better work. It is ill-constructed, and it readily oversteps the line between comedy and farce; but there is a real sense of fun in the coxcomb who laments that he is 'such a goodly person', and in the ragged client who, without a penny for his own dinner, offers his empty purse to the service of his patron. Dame Custance, too, is a pleasant and buxom heroine, and every one is glad when her vanquished suitor takes his defeat in good part, and bestows a blessing upon her and his rival. There is no great craftsmanship, there is no serious attempt at delineation: it is a cheery and irresponsible piece of Christmas mirth, suitable for the end of term when the holidays begin to-morrow and even the Dominie unbends. We must needs be in a very saturnine humour to withstand the spirit of the time and to criticize by any absolute standard the boyish actors and the impromptu stage.

NICHOLAS UDALL (1505-1556) was a native of Hampshire, and was educated at Winchester and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. After graduating in 1524 he became a Fellow and Tutor of his college, and about 1534 was appointed Head Master of Eton. In 1541 he was dismissed from his post and

committed to the Marshalsea; but he had powerful patrons at Court, and was soon released. From 1542 to 1548 he was occupied mainly in literary work. About 1550 he published a translation of Peter Martyr's *Treatise of the Eucharist*, and shortly afterwards was presented successively to a prebend at Windsor and to the living of Calbourne in the Isle of Wight. In 1553 or 1554 he succeeded Alexander Nowell as Head Master of Westminster School, and held that office until, in November, 1556, the school was absorbed by Queen Mary into the monastery of Westminster. A month later he died, and was buried in St. Margaret's. The date of his comedy *Ralph Roister Doister* has been a matter of some controversy. Mr. Sidney Lee holds that it 'may have been written before 1541' for the performance at Eton. Professor Hales, who is followed by Mr. Chambers, places it in the Westminster period, on the ground that Udall is not mentioned in the 1548 edition of Bale's *Scriptores*, and that there is a quotation from the play in the third edition (1554) of T. Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, but not in the earlier editions. On the whole it would seem probable that the production may be assigned to Christmas, 1553. The Epilogue, which is like a set of variations on the National Anthem, is said to have been added by a later hand in the reign of Elizabeth.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER, a vain-glorious gull.	SYM SURESBY, servant to Goodluck.
MATHEW MERYGREEKE, a parasite.	A SCRIVENER.
GAWAYN GOODLUCK, be- trothed to Dame Custance.	MUSICIANS.
TRISTRAM TRUSTY, his friend.	DAME CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, a widow.
DOBINET } servants to	MADGE MUMBLECRUST, her nurse.
DOUGHTIE } Roister Doister.	
HARPAX }	
TOM TRUPENIE, servant to Dame Custance.	TIBET TALKAPACE } her ANNOT ALYFACE } maids.

Scene: An open place near Dame Custance's house.

ACT I. SCENE I.

MATHEW MERYGREEKE. *He entereth singing.*

Mat. Mery. As long liveth the merry man, they say,
 As doth the sorry man, and longer by a day.
 Yet the grasshopper for all his summer piping
 Starveth in winter with hungry griping.
 Therefore another said saw doth men advise
 That they be together both merry and wise.
 This lesson must I practise or else ere long
 With me, Mathew Merygreeke, it will be wrong.
 Indeed men so call me, for by Him that us bought,
 Whatever chance betide, I can take no thought. 10
 Yet wisdom would that I did myself bethink
 Where to be provided this day of meat and drink;
 For know ye, that for all this merry note of mine,
 He might appose² me now that should ask where I dine.
 My living lieth here and there of God's grace,—
 Sometime with this good man, sometime in that place,
 Sometime Lewis Loytrer biddeth me come near,
 Somewhiles Watkin Waster maketh us good cheer,
 Sometime Davy Diceplayer, when he hath well cast,
 Keepeth revel-rout as long as it will last, 20
 Sometime Tom Titivile maketh us a feast,
 Sometime with Sir Hugh Pye I am a bidden guest,
 Sometime at Nichol Neverthrives I get a sop,
 Sometime I am feasted with Bryan Blinkinsoppe,
 Sometime I hang on Hankyn Hoddydodie's sleeve,
 But this day on Ralph Roister Doister's by his leave,
 For truly of all men he is my chief banker
 Both for meat and money, and my chief shootanker³.

¹ pose.

² Usually, though incorrectly, written 'sheetanchor'.

But now of Roister Doister somewhat to express,
 That ye may esteem him after his worthiness. 30
 In these twenty towns, and seek them throughout,
 Is not the like stock, whereon to graft a lout.
 All the day long is he facing and craking ¹
 Of his great acts in fighting and fray-making ;
 But when Roister Doister is put to the proof
 To keep the Queen's peace is more for his behoof.
 If any woman smile or cast on him any eye
 Up is he to the hard ears in love by-and-by,
 And in all the hot haste must she be his wife,
 Else farewell his good days, and farewell his life ! 40

I can with a word make him fain or loath,
 I can with as much make him pleased or wroth,
 I can, when I will, make him merry and glad,
 I can, when me lust, make him sorry and sad,
 I can set him in hope, and eke in despair,
 I can make him speak rough, and make him speak fair,
 But I marvel I see him not all this same day :
 I will seek him out.—But lo ! he cometh this way.
 I have yonder espied him sadly coming,
 And in love, for twenty pound, by his glooming. 50

ACT I. SCENE II.

Enter RALPH ROISTER DOISTER. *MERYGREEKE pretends not to see him.*

R. Roister. Come, death, when thou wilt, I am weary of my life.

M. Mery. [*aside*]. I told you, I, we should woo another wife.

R. Roister. Why did God make me such a goodly person ?

¹ boasting.

M. Mery. [*aside*]. He is in by the week ; we shall have sport anon.

R. Roister. And where is my trusty friend, Matthew Merygreeke ?

M. Mery. [*aside*]. I will make as I saw him not ; he doth me seek.

R. Roister. I have him espied, me thinketh ; yond is he. Haugh ! Mathew Merygreeke my friend, a word with thee.

M. Mery. [*aside*]. I will not hear him, but make as I had haste.—

[*Aloud.*] Farewell, all my good friends, the time away doth waste, 10

And the tide, they say, tarrieth for no man.

R. Roister. Thou must with thy good counsel help me if thou can.

M. Mery. God keep thee, worshipful Master Roister Doister.

And farewell thee, lusty Master Roister Doister.

[*Pretending to go.*

R. Roister. I must needs speak with thee a word or twain.

M. Mery. Within a month or two I will be here again. Negligence in great affairs, ye know, may mar all.

R. Roister. Attend upon me now, and well reward thee I shall.

M. Mery. I have take my leave, and the tide is well spent.

R. Roister. I die except thou help ; I pray thee be content. 20

Do thy part well now, and ask what thou wilt,
For without thy aid my matter is all spilt.

M. Mery. Then to serve your turn I will some pains take,

And let my own affairs alone for your sake.

R. Roister. My whole hope and trust resteth only in thee.

M. Mery. Then can ye not do amiss, whatever it be.

R. Roister. Gramercies, Merygreeke; most bound to thee I am.

M. Mery. But up with that heart, and speak out like a ram.

Ye speak like a capon that hath had the cough now.

Be of good cheer; anon ye shall do well enow. 30

R. Roister. Upon thy comfort I will all things handle.

M. Mery. So lo! that is a breast to blow out a candle.

But what is this great matter? I would fain know.

We shall find remedy therefore, I trow.

Do ye lack money? Ye know mine old offers,

Ye shall always have a key to my purse and coffers.

R. Roister. I thank thee. Had ever man such a friend?

M. Mery. Ye give unto me; I must needs to you lend.

R. Roister. Nay, I have money plenty all things to discharge.

M. Mery. [*aside*]. That knew I right well when I made offer so large. 40

R. Roister. But it is no such matter.

M. Mery. What is it, than?

Are ye in danger of debt to any man?

If ye be, take no thought nor be not afraid;

Let them hardly take thought how they shall be paid.

R. Roister. Tut! I owe nought.

M. Mery. What then? fear ye imprisonment?

R. Roister. No.

M. Mery. No, i-wist, ye offend not, so to be shent¹.

What is it? hath any man threatened you to beat?

R. Roister. What is he that durst have put me in that heat?

¹ punished.

He that beateth me—by His arms—shall well find
That I will not be far from him nor run behind. 50

M. Mery. That thing know all men ever since ye over-
threw

The fellow of the lion which Hercules slew.

But what is it then ?

R. Roister. Of love I make my moan.

M. Mery. Ah! this foolish love ! wilt ne'er let us alone?
But because ye were refused the last day,
Ye said ye would ne'er more be entangled that way.
I would meddle no more since I find all so unkind.

R. Roister. Yea, but I cannot so put love out of my
mind.

M. Mery. But what or who is she with whom ye are
in love ?

R. Roister. A woman whom I know not by what means
to move. 60

M. Mery. Who is it ?

R. Roister. A woman yond.

M. Mery. What is her name ?

R. Roister. Her yonder.

M. Mery. Whom ?

R. Roister. Mistress—ah—

M. Mery. Fie, fie, for shame.
Love ye, and know not whom, but 'her yonder', 'a
woman' ?

We shall get you a wife—I cannot tell whan.

R. Roister. The fair woman that supped with us yester-
night,

And I heard her name twice or thrice and had it right.

M. Mery. Yea, ye may see ye ne'er take me to good
cheer with you.

If ye had, I could have told you her name now.

R. Roister. I was to blame indeed, but the next time
perchance— 69

And she dwelleth in this house.

M. Mery. What, Christian Custance?

R. Roister. I am utterly dead unless I have my desire.

M. Mery. Where be the bellows that blew this sudden
fire?

R. Roister. I hear she is worth a thousand pounds and
more.

Merygreeke promises to woo for him, in spite of the fact that he has heard that Dame Custance is betrothed to Gawayn Goodluck. Roister Doister gets a scrivener to write a love letter for him, and comes with Merygreeke to see how Custance is affected by it.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

ROISTER DOISTER. MERYGREEKE. CUSTANCE.

M. Mery. Let us see your letter.

Custance. Hold, read it, if ye can,
And see what letter it is to win a woman.

M. Mery. 'To mine own dear coney bird, sweetheart
and pigsnie
Good Mistress Custance, present these by-and-by.'

Of this superscription do ye blame the style?

Custance. With the rest as good stuff as ye read a great
while.

M. Mery. [*reads, altering the punctuation¹ as follows.*]

'Sweet Mistress whereas I love you nothing at all,

Regarding your substance and riches chief of all,

For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit

I commend me unto you never a whit.

10

Sorry to hear report of your good welfare.

For (as I hear say) such your conditions are

¹ Cf. the prologue to the Clown's play in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

That ye be worthy favour of no living man,
 To be abhorred of every honest man.
 To be taken for a woman inclined to vice.
 Nothing at all giving to Virtue her due price.
 Wherefore concerning marriage ye are thought
 Such a fine paragon as ne'er honest man bought.
 And now by these presents I do you advertise
 That I am minded to marry you in no wise. 20
 For your goods and substance I could be content
 To take you as ye are. If ye mind to be my wife
 Ye shall be assured for the time of my life.
 I will keep ye right well from good raiment and fare,
 Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care.
 Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty,
 Do and say what ye list, ye shall never please me,
 But when ye are merry, I will be all sad,
 When ye are sorry, I will be very glad.
 When ye seek your heart's ease, I will be unkind, 30
 At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find.
 But all things contrary to your will and mind
 Shall be done: otherwise I will not be behind
 To speak. As for all them that would do you wrong
 I will so help and maintain, ye shall not live long.
 Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you but I.
 I, who e'er say nay, will stick by you till I die.
 Thus good Mistress Custance, the Lord you save and
 keep
 From me Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep.
 Who favoureth you no less (ye may be bold) 40
 Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold.'
Custance. How by this letter of love, is it not fine?
R. Roister. By the arms of Caleys, it is none of mine.
M. Mery. Fie! you are foul to blame. This is your
 own hand.

Custance. Might not a woman be proud of such an husband?

R. Roister. Oh, would I had him here, the which did it indite.

M. Mery. Why, ye made it yourself, ye told me, by this light.

Custance. God be with you both, and seek no more to me. [*Exit.*

R. Roister. Woe! she is gone for ever. I shall her no more see.

Merygreeke persuades Roister Doister to try his fortune again, and to attempt to overawe Custance by appearing in armour.

ACT IV. SCENE VIII.

MERYGREEKE. CUSTANCE. ROISTER DOISTER. TIB.
TALKAPACE. ANNOT ALYFACE. MADGE MUMBLE-
CRUST. DOUGHTIE. HARPAX.

Two drums with their ensigs.

Custance. What caitiffs are those that so shake my house-wall?

M. Mery. Ah, sirrah! now, Custance, if ye had so much wit

I would see you ask pardon and yourselves submit.

Custance. Have I still this ado with a couple of fools?

M. Mery. Hear ye what she saith?

Custance. Maidens, come forth with your tools.

[*The Maids enter, armed.*]

R. Roister. In array.

M. Mery. Dubba-dub sirrah!

R. Roister. In array

They come suddenly on us.

M. Mery.

Dubba-dub !

R. Roister.

In array !

That ever I was born ! We are taken tardy.

M. Mery. Now, sirs, quit ourselves like tall men and hardy.

Custance. On afore, Truepennie ! Hold thine own,
Annot !

10

On toward them Tibet ! so ! stand fast together.

M. Mery. God send us a fair day.

R. Roister.

See, they march on hither.

Tib. Talk. But, Mistress !

Custance.

What sayest thou ?

Tib. Talk.

Shall I go fetch our goose ?

Custance. What to do ?

Tib. Talk.

To yonder captain I will turn her loose,
And she gape and hiss at him as she doth at me
I durst jeopard my hand she will make him flee.

They fight, and ROISTER DOISTER and his men flee.

ACT V. SCENE VI.

The play ends with the return of Gawayn Goodluck, who marries Custance. Roister Doister magnanimously pardons them both.

R. Roister. I will be as good friends with them as e'er
I was.

M. Mery. Then let me fetch your choir that we may
have a song.

R. Roister. Go.

[*Exit MERY.*]

G. Goodluck. I have heard no melody all this year long.

[*Enter MERY and MUSICIANS.*]

[*They sing.*]

G. Goodluck. The Lord preserve our most noble Queen
of renown,

And her virtues reward with the heavenly crown.

Custance. The Lord strengthen her most excellent
Majesty

Long to reign over us in all prosperity.

T. Trusty. That her godly proceedings the faith to
defend

He may 'stablish and maintain, through to the end.

M. Mery. God grant her, as she doth, the Gospel to
protect, 10

Learning and virtue to advance, and vice to correct.

R. Roister. God grant her loving subjects both the
mind and grace

Her most godly proceedings worthily to embrace.

Harpaz. Her Highness' most worthy counsellors God
prosper

With honour and love of all men to minister.

Omnes. God grant the Nobility her to serve and love
With all the whole Commonalty as doth them behove.

Amen.

FINIS.

CHAPTER III

THE COMEDY OF WIT

FROM the reign of Elizabeth to the reign of Anne it was an accepted convention to represent the Universities as the homes of dialectic. In satire, in essay, in romance, the newly-gowned graduate appears as a person of brisk and dapper wit, a little acid perhaps, as befits the common-room, and carrying no great weight in the sentence, but neatly turned and with a pretty trick of classical allusion. Some evidence for the truth of this judgement is afforded by Academic comedy. It delights in quip and repartee, in conceits and 'college jokes'; it trips an adversary on a word, and stabs him dead with an epigram; it often sacrifices action to dialogue, and the development of plot to the interplay of jest and rejoinder. The dramatist stands at the elbow of all his personages, and whatever the part that he assigns to them, prompts their speech with the same deft and pointed phraseology.

As the Elizabethan drama progressed this tendency was modified by a larger experience and a broader and more sympathetic treatment of human nature. But even from our greatest writers it is seldom entirely absent: it appears in the dialogue between Speed and Proteus at the beginning of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, it appears in the garden-scene of *Much Ado about Nothing*, it animates much of the wit of Beaumont and Fletcher. In our lesser dramatists, from Peele to Shirley, we may watch it gradually fade and degenerate into a mere

mechanical device, which starts from quickness and readiness of reply and grows in the end as tiresome as a parodied proverb or an inverted commonplace. But when fresh and novel the device must have been immensely effective, and that Shakespeare did not disdain to borrow it is a sufficient indication of its literary value.

As an early example we may take Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe*, which was produced, some ten years before Shakespeare's first play, in 1581. The style is beaten and wrought to the furthest pitch of elaboration: hardly any one can say a plain thing in a plain way; every word has its chime, every clause its antithesis; the very slaves are as witty as their masters, and as well supplied with tags of Oxford erudition. But though there is plenty of Euphuism in the comedy there is a great deal more than Euphuism. It is not merely a matter of affectation and of careful contrivance: the phrase often cuts clean, and many of the encounters are as good as a fencing match. Here is a masterly example of thrust and parry:—

Chrysus. Alexander, king Alexander, give a poor cynic a groat.

Alexander. It is not for a king to give a groat.

Chrysus. Then give me a talent.

Alexander. It is not for a beggar to ask a talent.

Diogenes, too, gives abundant opportunity for a crabbed humour, and affords a direct and telling foil to the courtliness of Apelles. Nor are the affectations themselves without charm. We should be sorry to forgo the piled metaphors and the remote analogies; our ears grow attuned to the artificial cadences, and, for a time at any rate, follow them with sensible pleasure. That it should continue to be a predominating force in our literature was to be neither expected nor desired: it had not enough of blood in its veins or of passion in its heart; but its

learning has a pleasant fragrance like that of the folios in a college library, and it plays with a *curiosa felicitas* upon the surface of human life.

For JOHN LYLY see Vol. I, p. 307. His dramas, of which *Alexander and Campaspe* was the first, were written for the companies of child-actors at St. Paul's and the Savoy, and continued in vogue until 1590, when the companies were disbanded by royal order. He thus ranks, with Peele and Greene, as one of Shakespeare's most immediate predecessors in Comedy: and in Shakespeare's earliest play (*Love's Labour's Lost*, 1591-2) his influence is clearly to be observed.

ALEXANDER AND CAMPASPE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

ALEXANDER, King of Macedon.	APELLES, a Painter.
HEPHESTION, his General.	SOLINUS } Citizens of Athens.
CLYTUS	SYLVIVS }
PARMENIO	PERIM
MILECTUS	MILO } Sons to Sylvius.
PHRYGIUS	TRICO }
MELIPPUS, Chamberlain to Alexander.	GRANICUS, Servant to Plato.
ARISTOTLE	MANES, Servant to Diogenes.
DIOGENES	PSYLLUS, Servant to Apelles.
CHRYSIPPUS	PAGE TO ALEXANDER.
CRATES	CITIZENS OF ATHENS.
CLEANTHES	CAMPASPE } Theban Cap-
ANAXARCHUS	TIMOCLEA } tives.
CHRYsus	LAIS.

Scene: Athens.

ACT I. SCENE II.

MANES, GRANICUS, PSYLLUS.

Manes. I serve instead of a master, a mouse, whose house is a tub, whose dinner is a crust, and whose bed is a board.

Psyllus. Then art thou in a state of life which philosophers commend. A crumb for thy supper, an hand for thy cup, and thy clothes for thy sheets. For *Natura paucis contenta*¹.

Gran. Manes, it is pity so proper a man should be cast away upon a philosopher: but that Diogenes, that dog², should have Manes, that dog-bolt³, it grieveth nature and spiteth art. . . . 11

Manes. Are you merry? it is a sign by the trip of your tongue, and the toys of your head, that you have done that to-day, which I have not done these three days.

Psyllus. What's that?

Manes. Dined.

Gran. I think Diogenes keeps but cold cheer.

Manes. I would it were so, but he keepeth neither hot nor cold.

Gran. What then, lukewarm? That made Manes run from his master the last day. 21

Psyllus. Manes had reason: for his name foretold as much.

Manes. My name? how so, sir boy?

Psyllus. You know that it is called *Mons à Movendo*⁴, because it stands still.

Manes. Good.

Psyllus. And thou art named *Manes à Manendo*, because thou runnest away. 22

Manes. Passing reasons! I did not run away, but retire.

¹ 'Natural wants are easily satisfied.'

² The school to which Diogenes belonged was called Cynic, from the Greek word for 'dog'.

³ A blunt arrow: used here as a term of humorous abuse.

⁴ An old school-jest that 'Mons' (mountain) was derived from 'movendo' (moving) because it did not move. 'Manendo' in the next speech means 'remaining'. The byword 'Lucus a non lucendo' is another jest of the same kind.

Psyllus. To a prison, because thou wouldest have leisure to contemplate.

Manes. I will prove that my body was immortal because it was in prison.

Gran. As how?

Manes. Did your masters never teach you that the soul is immortal?

Gran. Yes.

Manes. And the body is the prison of the soul.¹

Gran. True. 40

Manes. Then thus to make my body immortal I put it in prison.

Gran. Oh bad!

Psyllus. Excellent ill!

Manes. You may see how dull a fasting wit is: therefore, *Psyllus*, let us go to supper with *Granicus*: *Plato* is the best fellow of all philosophers. Give me him that reads in the morning in the school, and at noon in the kitchen.

Psyllus. And me. 50

Gran. Ah! sirs, my master is a king in his parlour, for the body: and a god in his study, for the soul. Among all his men he commendeth one that is an excellent musician; then stand I by and clap another on the shoulder and say, 'This is a passing good cook.'

Manes. It is well done, *Granicus*; for give me pleasure that goes in at the mouth, not the ear. . . .

Psyllus. I serve *Apelles*, who feedeth me as *Diogenes* doth *Manes*; for at dinner the one preacheth abstinence, the other commendeth counterfeiting: when I would eat meat, he paints a spit; and when I thirst, 'Oh,' saith he, 'is not this a fair pot?' and points to a table which

¹ Adapted from *Plato's Phaedo*.

contains the banquet of the gods, where are many dishes to feed the eye, but not to fill the body.

Manes. Thou art a god to me: for could I see a cook's shop painted, I would make mine eyes fat as butter. For I have naught but sentences to fill my maw, as *Plures occidit crapula quam gladius: musa ieiunantibus amica*¹: repletion killeth delicately: and an old saw of abstinence by Socrates, 'The belly is the head's grave.' Thus with sayings, not with meat, he maketh a gallimafray². 72

Gran. But how dost thou then live?

Manes. With fine jests, sweet air, and the dogs' alms.

Gran. Well, for this time I will stanch thy hunger, and among pots and platters thou shalt see what it is to serve Plato.

Psyllus. For joy of it, Granicus, let's sing.

Manes. My voice is as clear in the evening as in the morning. 80

Gran. Another commodity of emptiness.

[*Sings.*]

Oh for a bowl of fat Canary,
Rich Palermo, sparkling sherry,
Some nectar else from Juno's dairy,
Oh, these draughts would make us merry.

ACT I. SCENE III.

MELIPPUS, PLATO, ARISTOTLE, CHRYSIPPUS, CRATES,
CLEANTHES, ANAXARCHUS, ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION,
PARMENIO, CLYTUS, DIOGENES.

Melip. I had never such ado to warn scholars to come before a king. First I came to Chrysippus, a tall lean

¹ 'Drunkenness kills more than the sword: the Muse loves those who fast.'

² Lit. a hash of many kinds of meat.

old mad man, willing him presently¹ to appear before Alexander; he stood staring on my face, neither moving his eyes nor his body; I urging him to give some answer, he took up a book, sat down, and said nothing. Melissa, his maid, told me it was his manner, and that oftentimes she was fain to thrust meat into his mouth, for that he would rather starve than cease study. Well, thought I, seeing bookish men are so blockish, and great clerks such simple courtiers, I will neither be partaker of their commons² nor their commendations. From thence I came to Plato and to Aristotle, and to divers others; none refusing to come save an old obscure fellow, who sitting in a tub turned towards the sun read Greek to a young boy; him when I willed to appear before Alexander, he answered, 'If Alexander would fain see me, let him come to me; if learn of me, let him come to me; whatsoever it be, let him come to me.' 'Why,' said I, 'he is a king.' He answered, 'Why, I am a philosopher.' 'Why, but he is Alexander.' 'Aye, but I am Diogenes.' I was half angry to see one so crooked in his shape to be so crabbed in his sayings, so going my way, I said, 'Thou shalt repent it, if thou comest not to Alexander.' 'Nay,' smiling, answered he, 'Alexander may repent it if he cometh not to Diogenes; Virtue must be sought, not offered.' And so turning himself to his cell, he grunted I know not what, like a pig under a tub. But I must be gone, the philosophers are coming. [*Exit.*]

Plato, Aristotle, Cleanthes, and others enter and discuss philosophy. Diogenes jeers at them for their willingness to pay court to Alexander.

¹ immediately.

² fare.

ACT II. SCENE II.

ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, PAGE, DIOGENES, APELLES.

[*Enter ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, and PAGE.*]

Alex. Stand aside, sir boy, till you be called. Hephestion, how do you like the sweet face of Campaspe?

Hep. I cannot but commend the stout courage of Timoclea.

Alex. Without doubt Campaspe had some great man to her father.

Hep. You know Timoclea had Theagines to her brother.

Alex. Timoclea still in thy mouth! art thou not in love?

Hep. Not I.

10

Alex. Not with Timoclea, you mean; wherein you resemble the lapwing, who crieth most where her nest is not. And so you lead me from espying your love with Campaspe, you cry Timoclea.

Hep. Could I as well subdue kingdoms as I can my thoughts, or were I as far from ambition as I am from love, all the world would account me as valiant in arms as I know myself moderate in affection.

Alex. Is love a vice?

Hep. It is no virtue.

20

Alex. Well, now shalt thou see what small difference I make between Alexander and Hephestion. And since thou hast been always partaker of my triumphs, thou shalt be partaker of my torments. I love, Hephestion, I love! I love Campaspe, a thing far unfit for a Macedonian, for a king, for Alexander. Why hangest thou down thy head, Hephestion? blushing to hear that which I am not ashamed to tell.

Hep. Might my words crave pardon, and my counsel

credit, I would both discharge the duty of a subject, for so I am, and the office of a friend, for so I will. 31

Alex. Speak, Hephestion ; for whatsoever is spoken, Hephestion speaketh to Alexander.

Hephestion argues against love, and Alexander answers him.

Hep. I must needs yield, when neither reason nor counsel can be heard.

Alex. Yield Hephestion, for Alexander doth love, and therefore must obtain.

Hep. Suppose she loves not you ? affection cometh not by appointment or birth ; and then as good hated as enforced. 40

Alex. I am a king, and will command.

Hep. You may, to yield to lust by force ; but to consent to love by fear, you cannot.

Alex. Why, what is that which Alexander may not conquer as he list ?

Hep. Why, that which you say the gods cannot resist, love. 47

Alex. I am a conqueror, she a captive ; I as fortunate as she is fair : my greatness may answer her wants, and the gifts of my mind the modesty of hers : is it not likely then that she should love ? Is it not reasonable ?

Hep. You say that in love there is no reason, and therefore there can be no likelihood.

Alex. No more, Hephestion : in this case I will use mine own counsel, and in all other thine advice : thou mayest be a good soldier, but never good lover. Call my Page. [*Page advances.*] Sir, go presently to Apelles, and will him to come to me without either delay or excuse. 59

Page. I go.

[*Exit.*

[*The tub is thrust on.*]

Alex. In the mean season, to recreate my spirits, being so near, we will go see Diogenes. And see where his tub is. Diogenes?

Diog. Who calleth?

Alex. Alexander. How happened it that you would not come out of your tub to my palace?

Diog. Because it was as far from my tub to your palace, as from your palace to my tub.

Alex. Why then, dost thou owe no reverence to kings?

Diog. No.

70

Alex. Why so?

Diog. Because they be no gods.

Alex. They be gods of the earth.

Diog. Yea, gods of earth.

Alex. Plato is not of thy mind.

Diog. I am glad of it.

Alex. Why?

Diog. Because I would have none of Diogenes' mind but Diogenes.

Alex. If Alexander have anything that may pleasure Diogenes, let me know, and take it.

81

Diog. Then take not from me, that you cannot give me, the light of the world.

Alex. What dost thou want?

Diog. Nothing that you have.

Alex. I have the world at command.

Diog. And I in contempt.

Alex. Thou shalt live no longer than I will.

Diog. But I will die whether you will or no.

Alex. How should one learn to be content?

90

Diog. Unlearn to covet.

Alex. Hephestion, were I not Alexander, I would wish to be Diogenes.

Hep. He is dogged, but discreet; I cannot tell how

sharp, with a kind of sweetness ; full of wit, yet too-too¹ wayward.

Alex. Diogenes, when I come this way again, I will both see thee and confer with thee.

Diog. Do.

[*Re-enter Page with APELLES.*

Alex. But here cometh Apelles : how now Apelles, is Venus' face yet finished ?

101

Apel. Not yet : Beauty is not so soon shadowed, whose perfection cometh not within the compass either of cunning or of colour.

Alex. Well, let it rest unperfect, and come you with me, where I will show you that finished by nature that you have been trifling about by art. [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

APELLES, CAMPASPE, PSYLLUS.

Apel. Lady, I doubt whether there be any colour so fresh that may shadow a countenance so fair.

Camp. Sir, I had thought you had been commanded to paint with your hand, not to glose with your tongue ; but as I have heard, it is the hardest thing in painting to set down a hard favour, which maketh you to despair of my face ; and then shall you have as great thanks to spare your labour as to discredit your art.

Apel. Mistress, you neither differ from yourself nor your sex : for knowing your own perfection, you seem to dispraise that which men most commend, drawing them by that means into an admiration, where feeding themselves they fall into an ecstasy ; your modesty being the cause of the one, and of the other, your affections.

14

Camp. I am too young to understand your speech,

¹ A common repetition : cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II, sc. iv :

'O ! but I love his lady too-too much.'

though old enough to withstand your device ; you have been so long used to colours, you can do nothing but colour. 18

Apel. Indeed, the colours I see I fear will alter the colour I have : but come, madam, will you draw near, for Alexander will be here anon. *Psyllus*, stay you here at the window, if any inquire for me, answer, *Non lubet esse domi*¹. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE II.

PSYLLUS, MANES.

Psyllus (solus). It is always my master's fashion, when any fair gentlewoman is to be drawn within, to make me to stay without. But if he should paint Jupiter like a Bull, like a Swan, like an Eagle, then must *Psyllus* with one hand grind colours, and with the other hold the candle. But let him alone, the better he shadows her face, the more will he burn his own heart. And now if a man could meet with *Manes*, who, I dare say, looks as lean as if *Diogenes* dropped out of his nose— 9

[*Enter MANES.*]

Manes. And here comes *Manes*, who hath as much meat in his maw as thou hast honesty in thy head.

Psyllus. Then I hope thou art very hungry.

Manes. They that know thee know that.

Psyllus. But dost thou not remember that we have certain liquor to confer withal ?

Manes. Aye, but I have business ; I must go cry a thing.

Psyllus. Why, what hast thou lost ?

Manes. That which I never had, my dinner.

Psyllus. Foul lubber, wilt thou cry for thy dinner ?

¹ 'It is not my pleasure to be at home.'

Manes. I mean, I must cry ; not as one would say cry, but cry, that is make a noise. 21

Psyllus. Why fool, that is all one ; for if thou cry, thou must needs make a noise.

Manes. Boy, thou art deceived. Cry hath diverse significations, and may be alluded to many things ; knave but one, and can be applied but to thee.

Psyllus. Profound *Manes* !

Manes. We Cynics are mad fellows, didst thou not find I did quip thee ?

Psyllus. No verily ! why, what is a quip ? 30

Manes. We great girders¹ call it a short saying of a sharp wit, with a bitter sense in a sweet word.

Psyllus. How canst thou thus divine, divide, define, dispute, and all on the sudden ?

Manes. Wit will have his swing ; I am bewitched, inspired, inflamed, infected.

Psyllus. Well, then will not I tempt thy gibing spirit.

Manes. Do not, *Psyllus*, for thy dull head will be but a grindstone for my quick wit, which if thou whet with overthwarts², *periisti, actum est de te*³. I have drawn blood at one's brains with a bitter bob⁴. 41

Psyllus. Let me cross myself: for I die, if I cross thee.

Manes. Let me do my business, I myself am afraid lest my wit should wax warm, and then must it needs consume some hard head with fine and pretty jests. I am sometimes in such a vein, that for want of some dull pate to work on, I begin to gird myself.

Psyllus. The gods shield me from such a fine fellow, whose words melt wits like wax.

¹ mocker ; cf. 'Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me,' *Henry IV, Pt. II, Act I, sc. ii.*

² repartees.

³ 'You are undone : it is all over with you.'

⁴ jest.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

CLYTUS, PARMENIO, ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, CREYSUS,
DIOGENES, APELLES, CAMPASPE.

[*Enter CLYTUS and PARMENIO.*]

Clytus. Parmenio, I cannot tell how it cometh to pass, that in Alexander nowadays there groweth an impatient kind of life: in the morning he is melancholy, at noon solemn, at all times either more sour or severe than he was accustomed.

Par. In kings' causes I rather love to doubt than conjecture, and think it better to be ignorant than inquisitive: they have long ears and stretched arms, in whose heads suspicion is a proof, and to be accused is to be condemned. 10

Clytus. Yet between us there can be no danger to find out the cause: for that there is no malice to withstand it. It may be an unquenchable thirst of conquering maketh him unquiet: it is not unlikely his long ease hath altered his humour: that he should be in love, it is not impossible.

Par. In love, Clytus? no, no, it is as far from his thought as treason in ours; he whose ever-waking eye, whose never tired heart, whose body patient of labour, whose mind unsatiable of victory, hath always been noted, cannot so soon be melted into the weak conceits of love. Aristotle told him there were many worlds, and that he hath not conquered one that gapeth for all galleth Alexander. But here he cometh. 24

[*Enter ALEX. and HEPHEST.*]

Alex. Parmenio, and Clytus, I would have you both ready to go into Persia about an ambassage no less profitable to me than to yourselves honourable.

Clytus. We are ready at all commands ; wishing nothing else, but continually to be commanded.

Alex. Well, then withdraw yourselves, till I have further considered of this matter. 31

[*Exeunt* CLYTUS and PARMENIO.]

Alex. Now we will see how Apelles goeth forward : I doubt me that nature hath overcome art, and her countenance his cunning.

Hep. You love, and therefore think anything.

Alex. But not so far in love with Campaspe as with Bucephalus¹, if occasion serve either of conflict or of conquest.

Hep. Occasion cannot want, if will do not. Behold all Persia swelling in the pride of their own power: the Scythians careless what courage or fortune can do: the Egyptians dreaming in the soothsayings of their Augurs, and gaping over the smoke of their beasts' entrails. All these, Alexander, are to be subdued, if that world be not slipped out of your head, which you have sworn to conquer with that hand. 46

[*During the following speech the tub is thrust on, from which appears* DIOGENES, *to whom enter* CHRYSUS.]

Alex. I confess the labours fit for Alexander, and yet recreation necessary among so many assaults, bloody wounds, intolerable troubles: give me leave a little, if not to sit, yet to breathe. And doubt not but Alexander can, when he will, throw affections as far from him as he can cowardice. But behold Diogenes talking with one at his tub. 53

Chrysus. One penny, Diogenes, I am a Cynic.

Diog. He made thee a beggar that first gave thee anything.

¹ Alexander's war-horse.

Chryseus. Why, if thou wilt give nothing, nobody will give thee.

Diog. I want nothing, till the springs dry, and the earth perish. 60

Chryseus. I gather for the gods.

Diog. And I care not for those gods which want money.

Chryseus. Thou art a right Cynic that will give nothing.

Diog. Thou art not, that will beg anything.

Chryseus. Alexander, King Alexander, give a poor Cynic a groat.

Alex. It is not for a king to give a groat.

Chryseus. Then give me a talent.

Alex. It is not for a beggar to ask a talent. Away! Apelles? 71

[*The curtains open, discovering the studio with APELLES and CAMPASPE.*]

Apel. Here.

Alex. Now, gentlewoman, doth not your beauty put the painter to his trump¹?

Camp. Yes, my Lord, seeing so disordered a countenance, he feareth he shall shadow a deformed counterfeit.

Alex. Would he could colour the life with the feature. And me thinketh, Apelles, were you as cunning as report saith you are, you may paint flowers as well with sweet smells, as fresh colours, observing in your mixture such things as should draw near to their savours. 81

Apel. Your majesty must know, it is no less hard to paint savours than virtues; colours can neither speak nor think.

Alex. Where do you first begin when you draw any picture?

Apel. The proposition of the face in just compass, as I can.

¹ i. e. on his mettle. A metaphor from cards.

Alex. I would begin with the eye, as a light to all the rest. 90

Apel. If you will paint, as you are a king, your majesty may begin where you please ; but as you would be a painter, you must begin with the face.

Alex. Aurelius would in one hour colour four faces.

Apel. I marvel in half an hour he did not four.

Alex. Why, is it so easy ?

Apel. No, but he doth it so homely.

Alex. When will you finish Campaspe ?

Apel. Never finish : for always in absolute beauty there is somewhat above art. 100

Alex. Why should not I by labour be as cunning as Apelles ?

Apel. God shield you should have cause to be so cunning as Apelles !

Alex. Me thinketh four colours are sufficient to shadow any countenance, and so it was in the time of Phidias.

Apel. Then had men fewer fancies, and women not so many favours. For now, if the hair of her eyebrows be black, yet must the hair of her head be yellow¹: the attire of her head must be different from the habit of her body, else must the picture seem like the blazon of ancient armoury, not like the sweet delight of new-found amiableness. For as in garden knots² diversity of odours make a more sweet savour, or as in music divers strings cause a more delicate concert, so in painting, the more colours, the better counterfeit, observing black for a ground, and the rest for grace. 117

Alex. Lend me thy pencil, Apelles, I will paint, and thou shalt judge.

¹ It was customary in Elizabeth's reign for women to dye their hair yellow.

² The patterns in flower-beds.

Apel. Here.

120

Alex. The coal¹ breaks.

Apel. You lean too hard.

Alex. Now it blacks not.

Apel. You lean too soft.

Alex. This is awry.

Apel. Your eye goeth not with your hand.

Alex. Now it is worse.

Apel. Your hand goeth not with your mind. 128

Alex. Nay, if all be too hard or soft, so many rules and regards, that one's hand, one's eye, one's mind must all draw together, I had rather be setting of a battle than blotting of a board. But how have I done here?

Apel. Like a king.

Alex. I think so: but nothing more unlike a painter. Well, Apelles, Campaspe is finished as I wish, dismiss her, and bring presently her counterfeit after me.

Apel. I will.

[*ALEX. and HEPH. come from the studio.*]

Alex. Now, Hephestion, doth not this matter cotton² as I would? Campaspe looketh pleasantly, liberty will increase her beauty, and my love shall advance her honour. 141

Hep. I will not contrary your majesty, for time must wear out that love hath wrought, and reason wean what appetite nursed.

[*CAMPASPE comes from the studio.*]

Alex. How stately she passeth by, yet how soberly! a sweet consent in her countenance with a chaste disdain,

¹ i. e. charcoal.

² i. e. 'go right.' In the same sense the hero of Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* says, 'this gear will cotton', meaning 'this plot will succeed'.

desire mingled with coyness, and I cannot tell how to term it, a-curst¹ yielding modesty!

Hep. Let her pass.

149

Alex. So she shall for the fairest on the earth. [*Exeunt.*]

Apelles confesses his passion for Campaspe, and laments that with Alexander for a rival he has no hope of winning her.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, PAGE, DIOGENES,
APELLES, CAMPASPE.

[*Enter ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION and Page.*]

Alex. Me thinketh, Hephestion, you are more melancholy than you were accustomed; but I perceive it is all for Alexander. You can neither brook this peace, nor my pleasure; be of good cheer, though I wink, I sleep not.

Hep. Melancholy I am not, nor well content: for I know not how, there is such a rust crept into my bones with this long ease, that I fear I shall not scour it out with infinite labours.

9

Alex. Yes, yes, if all the travails of conquering the world will set either thy body or mine in tune, we will undertake them. But what think you of Apelles? Did ye ever see any so perplexed? He neither answered directly to any question, nor looked steadfastly upon anything. I hold my life the Painter is in love.

Hep. It may be: for commonly we see it incident in artificers to be enamoured of their own works, as Archidamus of his wooden dove, Pigmalion of his ivory image, Arachne of his wooden swan; especially painters, who playing with their own conceits, now coveting to draw

¹ Lit. 'cross-grained.' It means here a cross-play between modesty and readiness to yield.

a glancing eye, then a rolling, now a winking, still mending it, never ending it, till they be caught with it; and then poor souls they kiss the colours with their lips, with which before they were loath to taint their fingers. 24

Alex. I will find it out: page, go speedily for Apelles, will him to come hither, and when you see us earnestly in talk, suddenly cry out Apelles' shop is on fire!

Page. It shall be done.

Alex. Forget not your lesson. [Exit Page. 30

Hep. I marvel what your device shall be.

Alex. The event shall prove.

Hep. I pity the poor painter, if he be in love.

Alex. Pity him not, I pray thee: that severe gravity set aside, what do you think of love?

Hep. As the Macedonians do of their herb Beet, which looking yellow in the ground, and black in the hand, think it better seen than touched.

Alex. But what do you imagine it to be?

Hep. A word by superstition thought a god, by use turned to an humour, by self-will made a flattering madness. 41

Alex. You are too hard-hearted to think so of love. Let us go to Diogenes. Diogenes, thou must think it somewhat that Alexander cometh to thee again so soon.

Diog. If you come to learn, you could not come soon enough; if to laugh, you be come too soon.

Hep. It would better become thee to be more courteous, and frame thyself to please.

Diog. And you better to be less, if you durst displease.

Alex. What dost thou think of the time we have here? 51

Diog. That we have little, and lose much.

Alex. If one be sick, what wouldst thou have him do?

Diog. Be sure that he make not his physician his heir.

Alex. If thou mightst have thy will, how much ground would content thee?

Diog. As much as you in the end must be contented withal.

Alex. What, a world? 60

Diog. No, the length of my body.

Alex. Hephestion, shall I be a little pleasant with him?

Hep. You may: but he will be very perverse with you.

Alex. It skilleth not¹, I cannot be angry with him. Diogenes, I pray thee, what dost thou think of love?

Diog. A little worser than I can of hate.

Alex. And why? 69

Diog. Because it is better to hate the things which make to love, than to love the things which give occasion of hate.

Alex. Why, be not women the best creatures in the world?

Diog. Next men and bees.

Alex. What dost thou dislike chiefly in a woman?

Diog. One thing.

Alex. What?

Diog. That she is a woman. 79

Alex. In mine opinion thou wert never born of a woman, that thou thinkest so hardly of women. But now cometh Apelles, who I am sure is as far from thy thought as thou art from his cunning. Diogenes, I will have thy cabin removed nearer to my court, because I will be a philosopher.

Diog. And when you have done so, I pray you remove

¹ It matters not.

your court farther from my cabin, because I will not be a courtier.

[*Enter APELLES.*]

Alex. But here cometh Apelles. Apelles, what piece of work have you in hand ? 90

Apel. None in hand, if it like your majesty: but I am devising a platform¹ in my head.

Alex. I think your hand put it in your head. Is it nothing about Venus ?

[*Re-enter Page.*]

Apel. No, but something above Venus.

Page. Apelles, Apelles, look about you, your shop is on fire !

Apel. Ay me ! if the picture of Campaspe be burnt, I am undone ! 99

Alex. Stay, Apelles, no haste: it is your heart is on fire, not your shop; and if Campaspe hang there, I would she were burnt. But have you the picture of Campaspe ? Belike you love her well, that you care not though all be lost so she be safe.

Apel. Not love her: but your majesty knows that painters in their last works are said to excel themselves, and in this I have so much pleased myself, that the shadow as much delighteth me, being an artificer, as the substance doth others that are amorous. 109

Alex. You lay your colours grossly; though I could not paint in your shop, I can spy into your excuse. Be not ashamed, Apelles, it is a gentleman's sport to be in love. [*To Attendants.*] Call hither Campaspe. Methinks I might have been made privy to your affection; though my counsel had not been necessary, yet my countenance might have been thought requisite. But Apelles, for-

¹ sketch or design.

sooth, loveth underhand; yea, and under Alexander's nose, and—but I say no more.

Apel. Apelles loveth not so: but he liveth to do as Alexander will. 120

[*Enter CAMPASPE.*]

Alex. Campaspe, here is news. Apelles is in love with you.

Camp. It pleaseth your majesty to say so.

Alex. (aside). Hephestion, I will try her too.—Campaspe, for the good qualities I know in Apelles, and the virtue I see in you, I am determined you shall enjoy one the other. How say you, Campaspe, would you say Aye?

Camp. Your handmaid must obey, if you command.

Alex. (aside). Think you not, Hephestion, that she would fain be commanded? 130

Hep. I am no thought catcher, but I guess unhappily.

Alex. [to CAMP.]. I will not enforce marriage where I cannot compel love.

Camp. But your majesty may move a question where you be willing to have a match.

Alex. Believe me, Hephestion, these parties are agreed; they would have me both priest and witness. Apelles, take Campaspe: why move ye not? Campaspe, take Apelles: will it not be? If you be ashamed one of the other, by my consent you shall never come together. But dissemble not, Campaspe; do you love Apelles? 141

Camp. Pardon, my Lord, I love Apelles!

Alex. Apelles, it were a shame for you, being loved so openly of so fair a virgin, to say the contrary. Do you love Campaspe?

Apel. Only Campaspe!

Alex. Two loving worms, Hephestion! I perceive Alexander cannot subdue the affections of men, though he conquer their countries. Love falleth like dew, as well

upon the low grass as upon the high cedar. Sparks have their heat, ants their gall, flies their spleen. Well, enjoy one another, I give her thee frankly, Apelles. Thou shalt see that Alexander maketh but a toy of love, and leadeth affection in fetters; using fancy as a fool to make him sport, or a minstrel to make him merry. It is not the amorous glance of an eye can settle an idle thought in the heart; no, no, it is children's game, a life for seamsters and scholars; the one, pricking in clouts, have nothing else to think on, the other, picking fancies out of books, have little else to marvel at. Go, Apelles, take with you your Campaspe, Alexander is cloyed with looking on that which thou wonderest at. 162

Apel. Thanks to your majesty on bended knee, you have honoured Apelles.

Camp. Thanks with bowed heart, you have blessed Campaspe. [Exeunt APELL. and CAMP.

Alex. Page, go warn Clytus and Parmenio and the other Lords to be in readiness, let the trumpet sound, strike up the drum, and I will presently into Persia. How now, Hephestion, is Alexander able to resist love as he list? 171

Hep. The conquering of Thebes was not so honourable as the subduing of these thoughts.

Alex. It were a shame Alexander should desire to command the world if he could not command himself. But come, let us go, I will try whether I can better my hand with my heart than I could with my eye. And good Hephestion, when all the world is won, and every country is thine and mine, either find me out another to subdue, or of my word I will fall in love. [Exeunt.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMEDY OF HUMOURS

ONE general difference between the comedy of Shakespeare and that of Molière is that Shakespeare gives us the whole man, and Molière concentrates our attention on his most diverting aspect. We cannot imagine M. Jourdain making his fortune by shrewd and successful commerce: we infer that he has done so, but we have no idea what he said to his customers. With the young Falstaff, page to the Duke of Norfolk, we are almost as well acquainted as with the old Falstaff of Gadshill and Eastcheap: if a play were written on his boyhood we could keep tally and correct or approve the lines of the portrait. Molière, in short, begins his drama at the rise of the curtain, and is content to carry us through scene after scene of irresistible laughter: Shakespeare treats his drama as the most vivid chapter in a complete human life, and while we laugh shows us not only the action presented, but its origin and its sequel.

Jonson's method stands, in this matter, on the further side of Molière's. His chief concern is with 'humours', that is, with the whims, follies, and affectations of his day: his fun is almost impersonal, the judgement of common sense on extravagance and absurdity. In his later comedies he often pushes his point to the verge of eccentricity or monomania; in his first and greatest the more vivid characters are those which are further removed from a normal standard. Even when he is not ostensibly satirical, the whip

of the satirist is never far from his hand; he is happier in bantering a fop or exposing an impostor than in setting before our eyes the foibles of average humanity. Young Knowell, for instance, is a shadowy and unsubstantial figure: the play which turns on his fortune assigns to him only a minor part; while the real protagonists, the men of whom we can never have enough, are Matthew the dolt, and Bobadill the braggart, and that exquisite embodiment of pure foolishness, Master Stephen.

To contrast his attitude with that of Shakespeare, we have only to set Bobadill beside Parolles and Stephen beside Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Parolles is about as odious as any character at whom we can afford to laugh, but (apart from the fact that he is merely an incidental sketch) his last cry before detection stirs us, in spite of ourselves, to a strange and unexpected sympathy. Bobadill ruffles and hectors over the entire stage, he fills the whole theatre with his swaggering oaths and his monstrous pretensions, we enjoy every scene in which he appears, and yet when he comes to his final discomfiture we simply call the watch together and thank God that we are rid of a knave. Sir Andrew, again, gives abundant cause that 'many in Illyria do call him fool', but it is impossible to help liking him and hoping that he will settle down to the old age of Justice Shallow. Nobody cares a jot about Stephen (though we can scarce bear to let him out of our sight), or wastes a moment in wondering what will befall him when he has finished his ignominious supper at the buttery-hatch. Yet though Jonson's humour is unsympathetic, more intent, as Mr. Swinburne says, on the creation than on the creature, it is of its kind wonderfully keen and penetrating. And if we add that it is in essence neither coarse nor cruel, that it views its collection of grotesques from the vantage-ground of a sane and wholesome

manhood, we may judge that even for the want of sympathy there is a substantial compensation. His comic characters are all targets for the shafts of ridicule, but he hits them with a clean shot, and there is no poison on the barb.

A word may be added on the admirable prose of the dialogue. It is singularly free from false wit and tinsel device; there are a few clenches and a few pert phrases, but they are rarer than the fashion of the time allowed, and the words usually follow in the just and measured cadence of a thought that is trained but not overpowered by scholarship. If it be said that this was the common inheritance of Jonson's time, the answer is that he materially helped to augment and enrich it. No Elizabethan except Shakespeare wrote colloquial prose of such strength and purity; it runs without effort, it carries its meaning without strain; it sets a model which many successors have vainly attempted to imitate. 'C'est un drôle de métier,' said Molière, 'que de faire rire des honnêtes gens.' To the humour of Jonson we owe not only the gift of honest laughter, but the delight of genuine and unaffected workmanship.

NOTE.—*Every Man in his Humour* was produced in 1598. The comedies of Shakespeare which can most profitably be compared with it appeared all about the same time: *All's Well that Ends Well* in 1595, *Henry IV* and the *Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1597 (observe in the latter play Corporal Nym's use of the term 'humour'), *Henry V* in 1598 (see the scenes between Fluellen and Pistol), and *Twelfth Night*, the occasion of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in 1600.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KNOWELL, an old Gentleman.	ROGER FORMAL, his Clerk.
ED. KNOWELL, his Son.	KITELY, a Merchant.
BRAINWORM, the Father's man.	DAME KITELY, his Wife.
MR. STEPHEN, a Country Gull.	MRS. BRIDGET, his Sister.
DOWNRIGHT, a plain Squire.	MR. MATTHEW, the Town Gull.
WELLBRED, his Half-Brother.	CASH, Kitley's Man.
JUSTICE CLEMENT, an old merry Magistrate.	COB, a Water-bearer.
	TIB, his Wife.
	CAPT. BOBADILL, a Paul's Man ¹ .

[Scene: London.]

ACT I. SCENE I.

KNOWELL, BRAINWORM, MR. STEPHEN.

Old Knowell is up betimes, and calls for his son. While he is waiting there enters to him his nephew Master Stephen, who begins to vapour about his good-breeding and his gentlemanly tastes, until the old man loses patience and reads him a lecture.

Kno. What would I have you do? I'll tell you, kinsman;

Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive,
That would I have you do: and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,
Or every foolish brain that humours you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.

¹ 'i. e. a frequenter of the middle aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral, the common resort of cast captains, sharpers, gulls, and gossipers of every description' (Gifford).

He that is so disrespectful in his courses 10
 Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
 Nor would I you should melt away yourself
 In flashing bravery, lest while you affect
 To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
 A little puff of scorn extinguish it,
 And you be left like an unsav'ry snuff,
 Whose property is only to offend.
 I'd ha' you sober, and contain yourself ;
 Not that your sail be bigger than your boat ;
 But moderate your expenses now (at first) 20
 As you may keep the same proportion still.
 Nor stand so much on your gentility,
 Which is an airy and mere borrowed thing
 From dead men's dust and bones ; and none of yours,
 Except you make or hold it. Who comes here ?

ACT I. SCENE II.

SERVANT, MR. STEPHEN, KNOWELL, BRAINWORM.

Serv. Save you, gentlemen.

Step. Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility,
 friend ; yet you are welcome, and I assure you mine
 uncle here is a man of a thousand a year, Middlesex land :
 he has but one son in all the world ; I am his next heir
 (at the common law), Master Stephen, as simple as I stand
 here, if my cousin die (as there's hopes he will). I have
 a pretty living o' mine own too, beside, hard by here.

Serv. In good time, sir.

Step. In good time, sir ? why ! and in very good time,
 sir : you do not flout, friend, do you ? 11

Serv. Not I, sir.

Step. Not you, sir ? you were not best, sir ; an you
 should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly too ;

go to : and they can give it again soundly too, an need be.

Serv. Why, sir, let this satisfy you ; good faith, I had no such intent.

Step. Sir, an I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that presently. 20

Serv. Good Master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Step. And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion ! an you were out o' mine uncle's ground, I can tell you ; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither in't.

Kno. Cousin ! cousin ! will this ne'er be left ?

Step. Whoreson base fellow ! a mechanical serving-man ! By this cudgel, an 'twere not for shame, I would——

Kno. What would you do, you peremptory gull ? 30
If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.

You see, the honest man demeans himself
Modestly towards you, giving no reply
To your unseasoned, quarrelling, rude fashion ;
And still you huff it, with a kind of carriage
As void of wit as of humanity.

Go get you in ; 'fore heaven, I am ashamed
Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me. [*Exit STEPHEN.*]

Serv. I pray, sir, is this Master Knowell's house ?

Kno. Yes, marry is it, sir. 40

Serv. I should inquire for a gentleman here, one Master Edward Knowell ; do you know any such, sir, I pray you ?

Kno. I should forget myself else, sir.

Serv. Are you the gentleman ? Cry you mercy, sir : I was required by a gentleman i' the city, as I rode out at this end o' the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Kno. To me, sir ! What do you mean ? pray you

remember your courtesy. (*To his most selected friend, Master Edward Knowell.*) What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it? nay, pray you be covered. 51

Serv. One Master Wellbred, sir.

Kno. Master Wellbred? A young gentleman, is he not?

Serv. The same, sir; Master Kitely married his sister; the rich merchant i' the Old Jewry.

Kno. You say very true. Brainworm.

Brai. Sir.

Kno. Make this honest friend drink here: pray you go in.

This letter is directed to my son :

60

Yet I am Edward Knowell too, and may,

With the safe conscience of good manners, use

The fellow's error to my satisfaction.

Well, I will break it ope, old men are curious,

Be it but for the style's sake, and the phrase,

To see if both do answer my son's praises,

Who is almost grown the idolater

Of this young Wellbred: what have we here? what's this?

The letter is an invitation from Wellbred to young Knowell, promising him a merry party, and referring to old Knowell in somewhat disrespectful terms.

Old Knowell determines to watch his son carefully. Young Knowell, who is in love with Wellbred's sister-in-law, Mistress Bridget, learns that the letter has been intercepted and puts himself on his guard. Brainworm determines, for his own advantage, to further the intrigue, and in order to counter-check old Knowell, disguises himself as a broken-down soldier. He proceeds to test the efficacy of the disguise.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

BRAINWORM, ED. KNOWELL, MR. STEPHEN.

Brai. 'Slid, I cannot choose but laugh to see myself translated thus, from a poor creature to a creator; for now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace: and yet the lie to a man of my coat is as ominous a fruit as the Fico¹. O sir, it holds for good policy ever, to have that outwardly in vilest estimation that inwardly is most dear to us. So much for my borrowed shape. Well, the truth is, my old master intends to follow my young, dry foot, over Moorfields to London, this morning; now I, knowing of this hunting match, or rather conspiracy, and to insinuate with my young master (for so must we that are blue-waters² and men of hope and service do, or perhaps we may wear Motley at the year's end, and who wears Motley, you know), have got me afore in this disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscado and intercept him in the midway. If I can but get his cloak, his purse, his hat, nay, anything to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey, *Veni, vidi, vici*, I may say with Captain Caesar, I am made for ever, i' faith. Well, now must I practise to get the true garb of one of these Lanceknights³, my arm here, and my—— Young master! and his cousin, Mr. Stephen, as I am true counterfeit man of war, and no soldier! 23

E. Kno. So, sir; and how then, coz?

Step. 'Sfoot, I have lost my purse, I think.

E. Kno. How? lost your purse? where? when had you it?

Step. I cannot tell. Stay.

¹ Figs were sometimes used in Italy for conveying poison.

² Blue was the traditional livery of servants, as motley of fools.

³ A Flemish term for common soldiers.

Brai. 'Slid! I am afraid they will know me: would I could get by them!

30

E. Kno. What? ha' you it?

Step. No, I think I was bewitched, I——

E. Kno. Nay, do not weep the loss, hang it, let it go.

Step. Oh, it's here: no, an it had been lost, I had not cared, but for a jet ring Mrs. Mary sent me.

E. Kno. A jet ring? Oh the poesy, the poesy?

Step. Fine, i' faith! 'Though Fancy sleep, my love is deep.' Meaning that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly.

E. Kno. Most excellent!

40

Step. And then I sent her another, and my poesy was, 'The deeper the sweeter, I'll be judged by St. Peter.'

E. Kno. How, by St. Peter? I do not conceive that.

Step. Marry, St. Peter, to make up the metre.

E. Kno. Well, there the Saint was your good patron, he helped you at your need; thank him, thank him.

Brai. I cannot take leave on 'em so; I will venture, come what will.

[*He comes back.*

Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns for a very excellent good blade here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, one that, in the better state of my fortunes, scorned so mean a refuge; but now it is the humour of necessity to have it so. You seem to be gentlemen well affected to martial men, else should I rather die with silence than live with shame. However, vouchsafe to remember it is my want speaks, not myself: this condition agrees not with my spirit——

E. Kno. Where hast thou served?

58

Brai. May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungaria, Dalmatia, Poland, where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by sea and land, any time this fourteen years, and followed the fortunes of the best

commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo, once at the relief of Vienna ; I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic gulf, a gentleman-slave in the galleys thrice, where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both the thighs, and yet being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance, nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Step. How will you sell this rapier, friend ? 70

Brai. Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgement ; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Step. True, I am a gentleman, I know that, friend : but what though ? I pray you say, what would you ask ?

Brai. I assure you, the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe.

E. Kno. Aye, with a velvet scabbard, I think.

Step. Nay, an't be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that's flat : I'd not wear it as 'tis, an you would give me an angel. 80

Brai. At your worship's pleasure, sir ; nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo¹.

Step. I had rather it were a Spaniard. But tell me, what shall I give you for it ? An it had a silver hilt——

E. Kno. Come, come, you shall not buy it ; hold, there's a shilling, fellow, take thy rapier.

Step. Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so ; and there's another shilling, fellow ; I scorn to be out-bidden. What, shall I walk with a cudgel, like Higgin-bottom, and may have a rapier for money ? 90

E. Kno. You may buy one in the city.

Step. Tut, I'll buy this i' the field, so I will ; I have a mind to 't, because 'tis a field-rapier. Tell me your lowest price.

E. Kno. You shall not buy it, I say.

¹ See note on p. 148.

Step. By this money, but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

E. Kno. Come away, you are a fool.

Step. Friend, I am a fool, that's granted; but I'll have it, for that word's sake. Follow me for your money. 100

Brai. At your service, sir.

ACT II. SCENE V.

Brainworm, still in his disguise, meets old Knowell, and is told to follow him home.

Brai. Yes, sir, straight, I'll but garter my hose. . . . Now shall I be possessed of all his counsels, and, by that conduit, my young master. Well, he is resolved to prove my honesty; faith, and I'm resolved to prove his patience: Oh! I shall abuse him intolerably. This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier. . . . It is no matter, let the world think me a bad counterfeit if I cannot give him the slip at an instant: why, this is better than to have stayed his journey! well, I'll follow him. Oh, how I long to be employed!

ACT III. SCENE I.

MATTHEW, WELLBRED, BOBADILL, ED. KNOWELL,
STEPHEN.

Mat. Yes, faith, sir, we were at your lodging to seek you too.

Wel. Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bod. Your brother delivered us as much.

Wel. Who? my brother Downright?

Bob. He! Mr. Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honour, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a —

Wel. Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother. 10

Bob. I protest to you, as I have a thing to be said about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part —

Wel. Good captain, faces about—to some other discourse.

Bob. With your leave, sir, an there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George.

Mat. Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how; he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion —

19

Enter young KNOWELL.

Wel. Ned Knowell! by my soul, welcome; how dost thou, sweet spirit, my genius? 'Slid! I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better, while I live, for this; my dear fury, now I see there's some love in thee! Sir, these be the two I writ to thee of (nay, what a drowsy humour is this now? why dost thou not speak?)

E. Kno. Oh, you are a fine gallant, you sent me a rare letter!

Wel. Why, was't not rare?

28

E. Kno. Yes, I'll be sworn, I was ne'er guilty of reading the like; match it in all Pliny, or Symmachus' epistles¹, and I'll have my judgement burned in the ear for a rogue: make much of thy vein, for it is inimitable. But I marvel what camel it was that had the carriage of it; for, doubtless, he was no ordinary beast that brought it!

Wel. Why?

E. Kno. Why, say'st thou? why dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning (the sober time of the day too), could have mista'en my father for me?

Wel. 'Slid, you jest, I hope.

40

E. Kno. Indeed, the best use we can turn it to is to

¹ Two famous letter-writers who lived, respectively, in the first and fourth centuries A. D.

make a jest on't now ; but I'll assure you, my father had the full view of your flourishing style some hour before I saw it.

Wel. What a dull slave was this ! But, sirrah, what said he to it, i' faith ?

E. Kno. Nay, I know not what he said : but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Wel. What ? what ?

49

E. Kno. Marry, that thou art some strange dissolute young fellow, and I a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Wel. Tut, that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 'twill change shortly ; but, sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-by's here ; thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in 'em, if thou hear'st 'em once go : my wind-instruments. I'll wind them up—— But what strange piece of silence is this ? the sign of the dumb man ?

E. Kno. O sir, a kinsman of mine, one that may make your music the fuller, an he please : he has his humour, sir.

61

Wel. Oh, what is 't ? what is 't ?

E. Kno. Nay, I'll neither do your judgement nor his folly that wrong as to prepare your apprehension ; I'll leave him to the mercy o' your search, if you can take him, so.

66

Wel. Well, Captain Bobadill, Mr. Matthew 'pray you know this gentleman here ; he is a friend of mine, and one that will deserve your affection. I know not your name, sir, but I shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

[To MASTER STEPHEN.

Step. My name is Mr. Stephen, sir, I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir, his father is mine uncle, sir : I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

75

Bob. Sir, I must tell you this, I am no general man, but for Mr. Wellbred's sake (you may embrace it at what height of favour you please) I do communicate with you, and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts; I love few words. [To KNOWELL.

E. Kno. And I fewer, sir; I have scarce enough to thank you.

Mat. But are you indeed, sir, so given to it? 83

[To MASTER STEPHEN.

Step. Aye, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mat. Oh, it's your only fine humour, sir, your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir: I am melancholy myself, divers times, sir, and then do I no more but take pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score, or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

E. Kno. Sure he utters them then by the gross. 80

Step. Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.

E. Kno. I' faith, better than in measure, I'll undertake.

Mat. Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study, it's at your service.

Step. I thank you, sir, I shall be bold, I warrant you: have you a stool there, to be melancholy upon?

Mat. That I have, sir, and some papers there of mine own doing, at idle hours, that you'll say there's some sparks of wit in 'em, when you see them.

Wel. Would the sparks would kindle once, and become a fire amongst 'em, I might see self-love burnt for heresy.

Step. Cousin, is it well? am I melancholy enough?

E. Kno. Oh aye, excellent!

Wel. Captain Bobadill, why muse you so?

E. Kno. He is melancholy too.

Bob. Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honourable

piece of service, was performed to-morrow, being St. Mark's day, shall be some ten years now.

E. Kno. In what place, captain? 110

Bob. Why, at the beleag'ring of Strigonium¹, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen as any were in Europe lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first but the best leaguer that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking in of—what do you call it, last year, by the Genoways, but that, of all other, was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier. 120

Step. 'So, I had as lieve as an angel I could swear as well as that gentleman.

E. Kno. Then you were a servitor at both, it seems; at Strigonium, and what do you call 't?

Bob. O lord, sir, by St. George, I was the first man that entered the breach: and, had I not effected it with resolution, I had been slain if I had had a million of lives.

E. Kno. 'Twas pity you had not ten; a cat's and your own, i' faith. But, was it possible?

Mat. (Pray you, mark this discourse, sir. 130

Step. So I do.)

Bob. I assure you (upon my reputation) 'tis true, and yourself shall confess.

E. Kno. You must bring me to the rack first.

Bob. Observe me judicially, sweet sir; they had planted me three demi-culverins² just in the mouth of the breach; now, sir (as we were to give on), their master-gunner (a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think) confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire; I spying

¹ Gran in Hungary, retaken from the Turks in 1597.

² Cannon.

his intendment, discharg'd my petrionel¹ in his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier, ran violently upon the Moors that guarded the ordnance, and put 'em pell-mell to the sword. 143

Wel. To the sword? to the rapier, captain?

E. Kno. Oh, it was a good figure observ'd, sir? but did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?

Bob. Without any impeach o' the earth; you shall perceive, sir. It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on poor gentleman's thigh; shall I tell you, sir? you talk of *Morglay*, *Excalibur*, *Durindana*², or so: tut, I lend no credit to that is fabled of 'em, I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the boldlier maintain it. 152

Step. I mar'l whether it be a Toledo or no?

Bob. A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Step. I have a countryman of his here.

Mat. Pray you, let's see, sir; yes, faith, it is!

Bob. This a Toledo? pish.

Step. Why do you pish, captain?

Bob. A Fleming, by Heav'n: I'll buy them for a guilder apiece, an I would have a thousand of them. 160

E. Kno. How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Wel. Where bought you it, Master Stephen?

Step. Of a scurvy rogue soldier (a hundred of lice go with him); he swore it was a Toledo.

Bob. A poor provant³ rapier, no better.

Mat. Mass, I think it be indeed, now I look on 't better.

E. Kno. Nay, the longer you look on 't the worse. Put it up, put it up.

Step. Well, I will put it up; but by—(I ha' forgot the

¹ A large pistol or carbine.

² *Morglay* was the sword of Bevis of Southampton, *Excalibur* of King Arthur, and *Durindana* of Roland.

³ Supplied to common soldiers. So Webster speaks of 'provant apparel'.

captain's oath, I thought to ha' sworn by it), an e'er I meet him—— 171

Wel. Oh, it is past help now, sir, you must have patience.

ACT III. SCENE II.

E. KNOWELL, BRAINWORM, STEPHEN, WELLBRED, BOBARDILL, MATTHEW.

E. Kno. A miracle, cousin, look here! look here!

Step. Oh, 'slid, by your leave, do you know me, sir?

Brai. Aye, sir, I know you by sight.

Step. You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brai. Yes, marry did I, sir.

Step. You said it was a Toledo, ha?

Brai. True, I did so.

Step. But it is none.

Brai. No, sir, I confess it, it is none. 9

Step. Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confessed it; by God's will an you had not confessed it——

E. Kno. Oh, cousin, forbear, forbear.

Step. Nay, I have done, cousin.

Wel. Why, you have done like a gentleman; he has confessed it, what would you more?

Step. Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal, under his favour, do you see. 18

E. Kno. Aye, by his leave, he is, and under favour; a pretty piece of civility! Sirrah, how dost thou like him?

Wel. Oh, it's a most precious fool, make much on him: I can compare him to nothing more happily than a drum; for every one may play upon him.

E. Kno. No, no, a child's whistle were far the fitter.

Brai. Sir, shall I entreat a word with you?

E. Kno. With me, sir? you have not another Toledo to sell, have you?

Brai. You are conceited¹, sir ; your name is Master Knowell, as I take it ?

E. Kno. You are i' the right ; you mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you ? 31

Brai. No, sir, I am none of that coat.

E. Kno. Of as bare a coat, though ; well, say, sir.

Brai. Faith, sir, I am but servant to the drum extraordinary, and indeed (this smoky varnish being washed off, and three or four patches removed) I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father, Brainworm.

E. Kno. Brainworm ! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blown thee hither in this shape ? 40

Brai. The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning ; the same that blew you to the Windmill, and your father after you.

E. Kno. My father !

Brai. Nay, never start, 'tis true ; he has followed you over the fields by the foot, as you would do a hare i' the snow.

E. Kno. Sirrah Wellbred, what shall we do, sirrah ? my father is come over after me.

Wel. Thy father ? where is he ? 50

Brai. At Justice Clement's house, in Coleman Street, where he but stays my return ; and then——

Wel. Who 's this ? Brainworm ?

Brai. The same, sir.

Wel. Why, how, in the name of wit, com'st thou transmuted thus ?

Brai. Faith, a device, a device ; nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here ; withdraw and I'll tell you all.

¹ witty.

ACT IV.

Matthew, young Knowell's rival for the hand of Mistress Bridget, goes with his friend Bobadill to woo her. He is followed to the house by young Knowell, Downright, and Stephen. Arrived at the reception room he presses his suit in such bad verses that Downright, after a few muttered comments, loses his temper, quarrels with the whole company, and draws upon Bobadill, who threatens him. The combatants are parted by Kitely.

To remove the two guardians out of the way, Brainworm tells old Knowell that his son is revelling at a low tavern kept by Cob, and sends Kitely on a false errand to Justice Clement. Mrs. Kitely, thinking that her husband has gone to Cob's house, sets out in search of him, leaving the coast clear for young Knowell and Bridget.

ACT IV. SCENE VII.

MATTHEW, ED. KNOWELL, BOBADILL, STEPHEN ; DOWN-
RIGHT [*to them*].

Mat. Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him, where we were to-day, Mr. Wellbred's half-brother ? I think the whole earth cannot show his parallel, by this daylight.

E. Kno. We were now speaking of him : captain Bobadill tells me he is fallen foul o' you too.

Mat. O, aye, sir, he threat'ned me with the bastinado.

Bob. Aye, but I think I taught you prevention this morning, for that—— You shall kill him beyond question : if you be so generously minded. 10

Mat. Indeed, it is a most excellent trick !

Bob. Oh, you do not give spirit enough to your motion ; you are too tardy, too heavy ! Oh, it must be done like lightning, hay ? [*He practises at a post.*]

Mat. Rare captain !

Bob. Tut, 'tis nothing, an 't be not done in a —— punto !

E. Kno. Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defence here?

Mat. O, good sir! yes, I hope he has. 19

Bob. I will tell you, sir. Upon my first coming to the city, after my long travel, for knowledge (in that mystery only) there came three or four of 'em to me, at a gentleman's house where it was my chance to be resident at that time, to entreat my presence at their schools; and withal so much importun'd me, that (I protest to you as I am a gentleman) I was ashamed of their rude demeanour out of all measure: well, I told 'em that to come to a public school, they should pardon me, it was opposite (in diameter) to my humour; but, if so be they would give their attendance at my lodging, I protested to do them what right or favour I could, as I was a gentleman, and so forth. 32

E. Kno. So, sir, then you tried their skill.

Bob. Alas, soon tried! you shall hear, sir. Within two or three days after they came; and, by honesty, fair sir, believe me, I graced them exceedingly, showed them some two or three tricks of prevention have purchased 'em since a credit to admiration! they cannot deny this: and yet now they hate me, and why? because I am excellent, and for no other vile reason on the earth. 40

E. Kno. This is strange and barbarous! as ever I heard.

Bob. Nay, for a more instance of their preposterous natures; but note, sir. They have assaulted me some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walked alone in divers skirts i' th' town, as Turnbull, Whitechapel, Shore-ditch, which were then my quarters; and since, upon the Exchange, at my lodging, and at my ordinary: where I have driven them afore me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe

me. Yet all this lenity will not o'ercome their spleen; they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill a man may spurn abroad with his foot at pleasure. By myself I could have slain them all, but I delight not in murder. I am loath to bear any other than this bastinado for 'em: yet I hold it good polity not to go disarmed, for though I be skilful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.

E. Kno. Aye, believe me, may you, sir: and, in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so. 60

Bob. Alas, no: what's a peculiar man to a nation? not seen.

E. Kno. Oh, but your skill, sir.

Bob. Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal; I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself; but were I known to her majesty and the lords (observe me), I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general, but to save the one half, nay, three parts of her yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you? 73

E. Kno. Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bob. Why thus, sir. I would select nineteen more, to myself, throughout the land; gentlemen they should be of good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have: and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your punto, your reverso, your stoccata, your imbroccato, your passada, your montanto¹; till they could all play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy

¹ Technical terms of the fencing-school.

were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not in their honour refuse us; well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand; forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this will I venture my poor gentleman-like carcass to perform, provided there be no treason practis'd upon us, by fair and discreet manhood; that is, civilly by the sword.

E. Kno. Why, are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times?

Bob. Tut, never miss thrust upon my reputation with you. 100

E. Kno. I would not stand in Downright's state then, an' you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bob. Why, sir, you mistake me! if he were here now, by this welkin, I would not draw my weapon on him! let this gentleman do his mind: but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun, wherever I meet him.

Mat. Faith, and I'll have a fling at him at my distance. 109

E. Kno. Gods so, look where he is; yonder he goes.

[*Downright walks over the stage.*]

Dow. What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with these bragging rascals?

Bob. It's not he; is it?

E. Kno. Yes, faith, it is he.

Mat. I'll be hanged then if that were he.

E. Kno. Sir, keep your hanging good for some greater matter, for I assure you that was he.

Step. Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bob. Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so: but I can hardly be induced to believe it was he yet. 121

E. Kno. That I think, sir. But see, he is come again.

Dow. Oh, Pharaoh's foot, have I found you? Come, draw to your tools; draw gipsy, or I'll thresh you.

Bob. Gentleman of valour, I do believe in thee, hear me——

Dow. Draw your weapon then.

Bob. Tall man, I never thought on it till now (body of me), I had a warrant of the peace served on me, even now as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, Mr. Matthew. 131

Dow. 'Sdeath, you will not draw then?

[He beats him and disarms him, Matthew runs away.]

Bob. Hold, hold, under thy favour forbear.

Dow. Prate again, as you like this, you foist, you. You'll control the point, you? Your consort is gone? had he stayed he had shared with you, sir.

Bob. Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace, by this good day.

E. Kno. No, faith, it's an ill day, captain, never reckon it other: but, say you were bound to the peace, the law allows you to defend yourself: that'll prove but a poor excuse. 142

Bob. I cannot tell, sir. I desire good construction in fair sort. I never sustained the like disgrace (by heaven), sure I was struck with a planet thence, for I had no power to touch my weapon.

E. Kno. Aye, like enough, I have heard of many that have been beaten under a planet: go, get you to a surgeon.

'Slid, an' these be your tricks, your passadas, and your montantos, I'll none of them. Oh, manners! that this age should bring forth such creatures! that nature should be at leisure to make 'em! Come, cousin. 152

Step. Mass, I'll ha' this cloak.

E. Kno. God's will, 'tis Downright's.

Step. Nay, it's mine now, another might have ta'en 't up as well as I, I'll wear it, so I will.

E. Kno. How an he see it? he'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Step. Aye, but he shall not ha' it: I'll say I bought it.

E. Kno. Take heed you buy it not too dear, cousin. 160

Brainworm disguises himself as Justice Clement's clerk. At the instance of Bobadill he arrests Downright for assault; at the instance of Downright he arrests Master Stephen for the theft of the cloak, though Stephen protests that he 'bought it in open market'. Both are taken off to answer before the court.

ACT V. SCENE I.

CLEMENT, KNOWELL, KITELY, DAME KITELY, TIB, CASH,
COB, Servants.

Clem. Nay, but stay, stay, give me leave: my chair, sirrah. You, Master Knowell, say you went thither to your son?

Kno. Aye, sir.

Clem. But who directed you thither?

Kno. That did mine own man, sir.

Clem. Where is he?

Kno. Nay, I know not now; I left him with your clerk, and appointed him to stay here for me.

Clem. My clerk? about what time was this? 10

Kno. Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clem. And what time came my man with the false message to you, master Kitely ?

Kit. After two, sir.

Clem. Very good ; but, Mrs. Kitely, how chance that you were at Cob's ? ha ?

Dame. An't please you, sir, I'll tell you : my brother Wellbred told me that Cob's house was a suspected place——

Clem. So it appears, methinks ; but on. 20

Dame. And that my husband used thither daily.

Clem. No matter, so he used himself well, mistress.

Dame. True, sir ; but you know what grows by such haunts oftentimes.

Clem. I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, mistress Kitely : but did you find your husband there, in that case as you suspected ?

Kit. I found her there, sir.

Clem. Did you so ? that alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there ? 30

Kit. Marry, that did my brother Wellbred.

Clem. How, Wellbred first tell her ; then tell you after ? Where is Wellbred ?

Kit. Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clem. Why, this is a mere trick, a device ; you are gulled in this most grossly all. Alas, poor wench, wert thou beaten for this ?

Tib. Yes, most pitifully, an't please you.

Cob. And worthily, I hope, if it shall prove so.

Clem. Aye, that's like, and a piece of a sentence. How now, sir ? what's the matter ? 41

Serv. Sir, there's a gentleman i' the court without desires to speak with your worship.

Clem. A gentleman ? what's he ?

Serv. A soldier, sir, he says.

Clem. A soldier ? Take down my armour, my sword, quickly. A soldier speak with me ! Why, when, knaves ? Come on, come on [*He arms himself*], hold my cap there, so ; give me my gorget, my sword : stand by, I will end your matters anon—— Let the soldier enter. Now, sir, what ha' you to say to me ? 51

ACT V. SCENE II.

[*To them*] BOBADILL, MATTHEW.

Bob. By your worship's favour——

Clem. Nay, keep out, sir ; I know not your pretence. You send me word, sir, you are a soldier : why, sir, you shall be answered here, here be them have been amongst soldiers. Sir, your pleasure.

Bob. Faith, sir, so it is, this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wronged and beaten, by one Downright, a coarse fellow, about the town here ; and for my own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humour of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace, despoiled me of mine honour, disarmed me of my weapons, and rudely laid me along in the open streets, when I not so much as once offered to resist him. 14

Clem. O, God's precious ! is this the soldier ? Here, take my armour off quickly, 'twill make him swoon, I fear ; he is not fit to look on't that will put up a blow.

Mat. An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clem. Why, an he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they ? 21

Serv. There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen here ; one upon your worship's warrant.

Clem. My warrant?

Serv. Yes, sir; the officer says, procured by these two.

Clem. Bid him come in. Set by this picture. What, Mr. Downright! are you brought at Mr. Freshwater's suit here?

ACT V. SCENE III.

DOWNRIGHT, STEPHEN, BRAINWORM [*to them*].

Down. I'faith, sir. And here's another brought at my suit.

Clem. What are you, sir?

Step. A gentleman, sir. O uncle!

Clem. Uncle! who? Master Knowell.

Kno. Aye, sir, this is a wise kinsman of mine.

Step. God's my witness, uncle, I am wronged here monstrously; he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir if I did not find it in the street by chance. 10

Down. Oh, did you find it now? You said you bought it erewhile.

Step. And you said I stole it: nay, now my uncle is here, I'll do well enough with you.

Clem. Well, let this breathe a while. You that have cause to complain there, stand forth: had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bob. Aye, an't please your worship.

Clem. Nay, do not speak in passion so: where had you it? 20

Bob. Of your clerk, sir.

Clem. That's well! an my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at 'em! where is the warrant? officer, have you it?

Brai. No, sir, your worship's man, Master Formal,

bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clem. Why, Master Downright, are you such a novice, to be served and never see the warrant?

Down. Sir, he did not serve it on me. 30

Clem. No? how then?

Down. Marry, sir, he came to me, and said he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so——

Clem. Oh, God's pity, was it so, sir? he must serve it? give me my long sword there, and help me off. So, come on, sir varlet, I must cut off your legs, sirrah: nay, stand up, I'll use you kindly; I must cut off your legs, I say.

[He flourishes over him with his long sword.]

Brai. Oh, good sir, I beseech you; nay, good master justice. 39

Clem. I must do it, there is no remedy, I must cut off your legs, sirrah, I must cut off your ears, you rascal, I must do it; I must cut off your nose, I must cut off your head.

Brai. Oh, good your worship.

Clem. Well, rise, how dost thou do now? dost thou feel thyself well? hast thou no harm?

Brai. No, I thank your good worship, sir. 47

Clem. Why, so; I said I must cut off thy legs, and I must cut off thy arms, and I must cut off thy head; but, I did not do it: so you said you must serve this gentleman with my warrant, but you did not serve him. You knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you must? sirrah, away with him to the gaol, I'll teach you a trick, for 'you must', sir. 54

Brai. Good sir, I beseech you, be good to me.

Clem. Tell him he shall to the gaol, away with him, I say.

Brai. Nay, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for

committing more than this : I will not lose by my travail
any grain of my fame, certain. 60

Clem. How is this ?

Kno. My man Brainworm ?

Step. O yes, uncle, Brainworm has been with my cousin
Edward and I all this day.

Clem. I told you all there was some device.

Brai. Nay, excellent justice, since I have laid myself
thus open to you, now stand strong for me ; both with
your sword and your balance.

Clem. Body o' me, a merry knave ! give me a bowl of
sack : if he belong to you, master Knowell, I bespeak
your patience. 71

Brai. That is it I have most need of. Sir, if you'll
pardon me only, I'll glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Kno. Sir, you know I love not to have my favours
come hard from me. You have your pardon, though
I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son
against me.

Brai. Yes, faith, I have, sir, though you retain'd me
doubly this morning for yourself : first as Brainworm ;
after, as FitzSword. I was your reformed soldier, sir.
'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Kno. Is it possible ! or that thou shouldst disguise thy
language so as I should not know thee ? 83

Brai. O sir, this has been the day of my metamor-
phosis ! It is not that shape alone that I have run through
to-day. I brought this gentleman, Mr. Kately, a message
too, in the form of Mr. Justice's man here, to draw him
out o' th' way, as well as your worship, while Master
Wellbred might make a conveyance of Mistress Bridget
to my young master. 90

Kit. How ! my sister stol'n away ?

Kno. My son is not married, I hope !

Bras. Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pound (which is her portion) can make 'em; and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding-supper at the Windmill, except some friend here prevent 'em, and invite 'em home.

Clem. Marry, that will I, I thank thee for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you and fetch 'em hither upon my warrant. Neither's friends have cause to be sorry, if I know the young couple aright. 101

Young Knowell and his bride are brought in and Justice Clement proceeds to deliver judgement all round. He burns Master Matthew's verses, thrusts him and Bobadill out of doors, sends Master Stephen to have his supper in the buttery with the servants, and ends by inviting the rest of the characters to the wedding-feast.

CHAPTER V

THE COMEDY OF MANNERS

THE chief types of Elizabethan comedy are so nearly contemporaneous that it is idle to base any argument on their historical sequence. In almost any example of Shakespeare they may be found together; among his comrades it is little more than an accident which kind should precede and which follow. At any rate, they overlap with a wide margin. The three *Parnassus* plays, which are as pure examples of academic wit as anything in Lyly, range from 1598 to 1603; poetic comedy may be traced back as early as Peele; the comedy of humours may be traced forward as late as Massinger. Yet a rough sort of classification is not without its use, and amid the distinction which it entails room must certainly be found for the comedy of manners, which aims neither at the heightened phrase nor at the eccentricities of character, but endeavours to set before its audience an amusing picture of everyday life. Many of the best-known instances belong to the early seventeenth century, such as *Michaelmas Term* by Middleton and the *Fair Maid of the Exchange* by Thomas Heywood (both in 1607); but the type may, perhaps, be most readily illustrated by the *Shoemaker's Holiday* of Dekker, which was written in the last year of the sixteenth, and did more than any other play to bring this method into vogue.

Dekker was peculiarly qualified for the purpose. He had a close and intimate acquaintance with London streets, he knew every one from the patron to the bailiff, he spent much of his long career as a bookseller's hack, dependent for his livelihood on a prompt pen and a quick observation. His prose satires, the *Seven Deadly Sins of London*, the *Bellman of London*, and the *Gull's Hornbook*, are full of rapid vignettes drawn evidently from the life, and presented as they stand without exaggeration or reticence. His work, if not always reputable, is cheery and good-tempered; he does not inveigh or moralize, but simply depicts, with evident pleasure, the queer, motley crowd of a great city.

In the *Shoemaker's Holiday* he is at the centre of his talent. There is no character out of the common, and the chief tax on our credulity, Lacy's disguise, is carefully prepared in the opening scene. The plot, woven of three strands, is simply contrived and naturally developed; given its chief motive, everything happens as it might have happened in actual life. The result is that we are soon on terms with all the dramatis personae, with Simon Eyre, testy, generous, and business-like, whose advancement to high office we cordially approve; with his garrulous and good-humoured wife; with Firk the apprentice and Ralph the crippled veteran, with Lacy the lover and sweet mistress Rose. The whole tone of the play is warm and genial: it enlists our sympathy and disarms our criticism; from the outset we are disposed to enjoy the story, and we follow it throughout with an agreeable feeling of goodwill. There are many dramas which treat of higher issues, and stir our pulse to a fuller movement. Dekker takes people of ordinary flesh and blood and sets them along a level course of ordinary love and ambition. The philosopher in Terence, to whom nothing of man's nature was alien, would find in

these pleasant folk a fitting subject of contemplation and study; we are hard to satisfy if we ask of them more than they can give, and dull of hearing if we fail to catch in their intercourse some clear echoes of our common humanity.

For THOMAS DEKKER see Vol. I. pp. 328-9.

THE SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE KING.

THE EARL OF CORNWALL.

SIR HUGH LACY, Earl of Lincoln.

ROWLAND LACY,	} His otherwise HANS,	} Nephews.
ASKEW		

SIR ROGER OATELEY, Lord Mayor of London.

Master HAMMON	} Citizens of London.
Master WARNER	
Master SCOTT	

SIMON EYRE, the Shoemaker.

ROGER, commonly called HODGE	} EYRE's Journey- men.
FIRK	
RALPH	

LOVELL, a Courtier.

DODGER, Servant to the EARL OF LINCOLN.

A DUTCH SKIPPER.

A BOY.

Courtiers, Attendants, Officers, Soldiers, Hunters, Shoemakers, Apprentices, Servants.

ROSE, daughter of SIR ROGER.

SYBIL, her Maid.

MARGERIE, Wife of SIMON EYRE.

JANE, Wife of RALPH.

Scene: London and Old Ford.

Rowland Lacy has fallen in love with Rose. The parents of both object to the match, and Lacy is sent off to the French wars. He escapes to Holland, and, having spent all his money, is reduced to working as a shoemaker.

ACT II. SCENE III.—*An open yard before Eyre's house.*

Enter EYRE, making himself ready.

Eyre. Where be these boys, these girls? They wallow in the fat brewiss of my bounty, and lick up the crumbs of my table, yet will not rise to see my walks cleansed. What, Nan! what, Madge Mumble-crust!¹ . . . What, Firk, I say; what, Hodge! open my shop-windows. What, Firk, I say!

Enter FIRK.

Firk. O master, is't you that speak bandog and Bedlam this morning? I was in a dream, and mused what mad-man was got into the street so early; have you drunk this morning that your throat is so clear? 10

Eyre. Ah, well said, Firk; well said, Firk. To work, my fine knave, to work! Wash thy face, Firk, and thou'lt be more blest.

Firk. Let them wash my face that will eat it. Good master, send for a souse-wife² if you'll have my face cleaner.

Enter HODGE.

Eyre. Away, sloven! Avaunt, scoundrel!—Good-morrow, Hodge; good-morrow, my fine foreman.

Hodge. O master, good-morrow; y'are an early stirrer. Here's a fair morning.—Good-morrow, Firk, I could have slept this hour. Here's a brave day towards. 21

Eyre. Oh, haste to work, my fine foreman, haste to work.

Firk. Master, I am dry as dust to hear my fellow Roger talk of fair weather; let us pray for good leather, and let

¹ An allusion to *Ralph Roister Doister*.

² A woman who washed and pickled pig's faces.

clowns and ploughboys and those that work in the fields pray for brave days. We work in a dry shop ; what care I if it rain ?

Enter MARGERY.

Eyre. How now, Dame Margery, can you see to rise ?
Trip and go, call up your maids. 30

Marg. See to rise ? I hope 'tis time enough, 'tis early enough for any woman to be seen abroad. I marvel how many wives in Tower Street are up so soon : 'tis not noon,—here's a yawling¹ !

Enter LACY disguised, singing.

Firk. Master, for my life, yonder's a brother of the gentle craft ; if he bear not Saint Hugh's² bones, I'll forfeit my bones ; he is some uplandish workman : hire him, good master, that I may learn some gibble-gabble ; 'twill make us work the faster.

Lacy pretends to be a Dutch workman called Hans. Eyre engages him in the place of his man Ralph, who has been pressed for the French war.

Hammon, out hunting, catches sight of Rose and falls in love with her. The Lord Mayor welcomes his suit as that of a 'proper gentleman'.

ACT III. SCENE III.—*London : a Room in the LORD
MAYOR'S House.*

Enter the LORD MAYOR and Master SCOTT.

L. Mayor. Good Master Scott, I have been bold with you,
To be a witness to a wedding-knot

¹ bawling.

² The patron saint of shoemakers. See Act V. sc. ii.

Betwixt young Master Hammon and my daughter.
Oh, stand aside ; see where the lovers come.

Enter Master HAMMON and ROSE.

Rose. Can it be possible you love me so ?
No, no, within those eyeballs I espy
Apparent likelihoods of flattery.
Pray now, let go my hand.

Ham. Sweet Mistress Rose,
Misconstrue not my words, nor misconceive
Of my affection, whose devoted soul 10
Swears that I love thee dearer than my heart.

Rose. As dear as your own heart ? I judge it right,
Men love their hearts best when th'are out of sight.

Ham. I love you, by this hand.

Rose. Yet hands off now !
If flesh be frail, how weak and frail's your vow !

Ham. Then by my life I swear.

Rose. Then do not brawl ;
One quarrel loseth wife and life and all.
Is not your meaning thus ?

Ham. In faith, you jest.

Rose. Love loves to sport ; therefore leave love, y'are
best.

L. Mayor. What ? square they, Master Scott ?

Scott. Sir, never doubt, 20
Lovers are quickly in, and quickly out.

Ham. Sweet Rose, be not so strange in fancying me.
Nay, never turn aside, shun not my sight :
I am not grown so fond, to fond my love
On any that shall quit it with disdain ;
If you will love me, so—if not, farewell.

L. Mayor. Why, how now, lovers, are you both agreed ?

Ham. Yes, faith, my lord.

L. Mayor. 'Tis well, give me your hand.
Give me yours, daughter.—How now, both pull back !
What means this, girl ?

Rose. I mean to live a maid. 30

Ham. But not to die one ; pause, ere that be said.

[*Aside.*

L. Mayor. Will you still cross me, still be obstinate ?

Ham. Nay, chide her not, my lord, for doing well ;
If she can live a happy virgin's life,
'Tis far more blessed than to be a wife.

Rose. Say, sir, I cannot : I have made a vow,
Whoever be my husband, 'tis not you.

L. Mayor. Your tongue is quick ; but Master Hammon,
know,
I bade you welcome to another end.

Ham. What, would you have me pule and pine and
pray, 40

With 'lovely lady,' 'mistress of my heart,'
'Pardon your servant,' and the rhymer play,
Railing on Cupid and his tyrant's-dart ;
Or shall I undertake some martial spoil,
Wearing your glove at tourney and at tilt,
And tell how many gallants I unhorsed—
Sweet, will this pleasure you ?

Rose. Yea, when wilt begin ?
What, love rhymes, man ? Fie on that deadly sin !

L. Mayor. If you will have her, I'll make her agree.

Ham. Enforced love is worse than hate to me. 50

(*Aside.*) There is a wench keeps shop in the Old
Change,

To her will I ; it is not wealth I seek,
I have enough, and will prefer her love
Before the world.—(*Aloud.*) My good lord mayor, adieu.
Old love for me, I have no luck with new. [*Exit.*

L. Mayor. Now, mammet, you have well behaved yourself,
 But you shall curse your coyness if I live.—
 Who's within there? See you convey your mistress
 Straight to th'Old Ford! I'll keep you straight enough.
 'Fore God, I would have sworn the puling girl 60
 Would willingly accepted Hammon's love;
 But banish him, my thoughts!—Go, minion, in!

[*Exit Rose.*]

Now tell me, Master Scott, would you have thought
 That Master Simon Eyre, the shoemaker,
 Had been of wealth to buy such merchandise?

Scott. 'Twas well, my lord, your honour and myself
 Grew partners with him; for your bills of lading
 Shew that Eyre's gains in one commodity
 Rise at least to full three thousand pound
 Besides like gain in other merchandise. 70

L. Mayor. Well, he shall spend some of his thousands
 now,
 For I have sent for him to the Guildhall.

Enter EYRE.

See, where he comes.—Good morrow, Master Eyre.

Eyre. Poor Simon Eyre, my lord, your shoemaker.

L. Mayor. Well, well, it likes yourself to term you so.

Enter DODGER.

Now, Master Dodger, what's the news with you?

Dodger. I'd gladly speak in private to your honour.

L. Mayor. You shall, you shall.—Master Eyre and
 Master Scott,

I have some business with this gentleman;
 I pray, let me entreat you to walk before 80
 To the Guildhall; I'll follow presently.
 Master Eyre, I hope ere noon to call you sheriff.

Eyre. I would not care, my lord, if you might call me King of Spain.—Come, Master Scott.

[*Exeunt EYRE and SCOTT.*]

L. Mayor. Now, Master Dodger, what's the news you bring?

Dodger. The Earl of Lincoln by me greets your lordship, And earnestly requests you, if you can, Inform him where his nephew Lacy keeps.

L. Mayor. Is not his nephew Lacy now in France? 90

Dodger. No, I assure your lordship, but disguised Lurks here in London.

L. Mayor. London? is't even so?
It may be; but upon my faith and soul,
I know not where he lives, or whether he lives:
So tell my Lord of Lincoln.—Lurks in London?
Well, Master Dodger, you perhaps may start him;
Be but the means to rid him into France,
I'll give you a dozen angels for your pains:
So much I love his honour, hate his nephew.
And, prithee, so inform thy lord from me. 100

Dodger. I take my leave. [*Exit DODGER.*]

L. Mayor. Farewell, good Master Dodger.
Lacy in London? I dare pawn my life
My daughter knows thereof, and for that cause
Denied young Master Hammon in his love.
Well, I am glad I sent her to Old Ford.
God's Lord, 'tis late; to Guildhall I must hie;
I know my brethren stay my company. [*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE IV.—*London: a Room in EYRE's House.*

Enter FIRK, MARGERY, HANS, and ROGER.

Marg. Thou goest too fast for me, Roger. O Firk!

Firk. Ay, forsooth.

Marg. I pray thee, run—do you hear?—run to Guildhall, and learn if my husband, Master Eyre, will take that worshipful vocation of Master Sheriff upon him. Hie thee, good Firk.

Firk. Take it? Well, I go; an he should not take it, Firk swears to forswear him. Yes, forsooth, I go to Guildhall.

Marg. Nay, when? thou art too compendious and tedious. 11

Firk. O rare, your excellence is full of eloquence; how like a new cart-wheel my dame speaks, and she looks like an old musty ale-bottle going to scalding.

Marg. Nay, when? thou wilt make me melancholy.

Firk. God forbid your worship should fall into that humour;—I run. [*Exit.*]

Marg. Let me see now, Roger and Hans.

Hodge. Ay, forsooth, dame—mistress I should say, but the old term so sticks to the roof of my mouth, I can hardly lick it off. 21

Marg. Even what thou wilt, good Roger; dame is a fair name for any honest Christian; but let that pass. How dost thou, Hans?

Hans. *Mee tanck you, vro.*¹

Marg. Well, Hans and Roger, you see, God hath blest your master, and, perdy, if ever he comes to be Master Sheriff of London—as we are all mortal—you shall see, I will have some odd thing or other in a corner for you: I will not be your back-friend; but let that pass. Hans, pray thee, tie my shoe. 31

Hans. *Yaw, ic sal, vro.*²

Marg. Roger, thou know'st the size of my foot; as it is none of the biggest, so I thank God, it is handsome

¹ Thank you, ma'am.

² Yes, I will, ma'am.

enough ; prithee, let me have a pair of shoes made, cork, good Roger, wooden heel too.

Hodge. You shall.

Marg. Art thou acquainted with never a farthingale-maker, nor a French hood-maker ? How shall I look in a hood, I wonder ! Perdy, oddly, I think. 39

Hodge. As a cat out of a pillory : very well, I warrant you, mistress.

Marg. Indeed, all flesh is grass ; and, Roger, canst thou tell where I may buy a good hair ?

Hodge. Yes, forseoth, at the poulterer's in Gracious Street.

Marg. Thou art an ungracious wag ; perdy, I mean a false hair for my periwig.

Hodge. Why, mistress, the next time I cut my beard, you shall have the shavings of it ; but they are all true hairs. 50

Marg. It is very hot, I must get me a fan or else a mask.

Hodge. So you had need to hide your wicked face.

Marg. Fie upon it, how costly this world's calling is ; perdy, but that it is one of the wonderful works of God, I would not deal with it. Is not Firk come yet ? Hans, be not so sad, let it pass and vanish, as my husband's worship says.

Hodge. Mistress, will you drink a pipe of tobacco ? 59

Marg. Oh, fie upon it, Roger, perdy ! These filthy tobacco-pipes are the most idle slaving baubles that ever I felt. Out upon it ! God bless us, men look not like men that use them.

Enter RALPH, lame.

Hodge. What, fellow Ralph ? Mistress, look here, Jane's husband ! Why, how now, lame ? Hans, make

much of him, he's a brother of our trade, a good workman, and a tall soldier.

Hans. You be welcome, broder.

Marg. Perdy, I knew him not. How dost thou, good Ralph ? I am glad to see thee well. 70

Ralph. I would to God you saw me, dame, as well As when I went from London into France.

Marg. Trust me, I am sorry, Ralph, to see thee impotent. Lord, how the wars have made him sunburnt ! The left leg is not well.

Ralph. I am glad to see you well, and I rejoice To hear that God hath blest my master so Since my departure.

Marg. Yea, truly, Ralph, I thank my Maker ; but let that pass. 80

Hodge. And, sirrah Ralph, what news, what news in France ?

Ralph. Tell me, good Roger, first, what news in England ? How does my Jane ? When didst thou see my wife ?

Where lives my poor heart ? She'll be poor indeed,
Now I want limbs to get whereon to feed.

Hodge. Limbs ? Hast thou not hands, man ? Thou shalt never see a shoemaker want bread, though he have but three fingers on a hand. 90

Ralph. Yet all this while I hear not of my Jane.

Marg. O Ralph, your wife,—perdy, we know not what's become of her. She was here a while, and because she was married, grew more stately than became her ; I checked her, and so forth ; away she flung, never returned, nor said bye nor bah ; and, Ralph, you know, 'ka me, ka thee.' And so, as I tell ye—Roger, is not Firk come yet ?

Hodge. No, forsooth. 99

Marg. And so, indeed, we heard not of her, but I hear she lives in London; but let that pass. If she had wanted, she might have opened her case to me or my husband, or to any of my men; I am sure, there's not any of them, perdy, but would have done her good to his power. Hans, look if Firk be come.

Hans. Yaw, ik sal, vro.

[*Exit HANS.*]

Marg. And so, as I said—but, Ralph, why dost thou weep? Thou knowest that naked we came out of our mother's womb, and naked we must return; and, therefore, thank God for all things. 110

Hodge. No, faith, Jane is a stranger here; but, Ralph, pull up a good heart, I know thou hast one. Thy wife, man, is in London; one told me he saw her a while ago very brave and neat; we'll ferret her out, an London hold her.

Marg. Alas, poor soul, he's overcome with sorrow; he does but as I do, weep for the loss of any good thing. But, Ralph, get thee in, call for some meat and drink, thou shalt find me worshipful towards thee. 119

Ralph. I thank you, dame; since I want limbs and lands, I'll trust to God, my good friends, and my hands. [*Exit.*]

Enter HANS and FIRK running.

Firk. Run, good Hans! O Hodge, O mistress! Hodge, heave up thine ears; mistress, smug up your looks; on with your best apparel; my master is chosen, my master is called, nay, condemned by the cry of the country to be sheriff of the city for this famous year now to come. And time now being, a great many men in black gowns were asked for their voices and their hands, and my master had all their fists about his ears presently, and they cried 'Ay, ay, ay, ay,'—and so I came away— 130

Wherefore without all other griev
I do salute you, Mistress Shrieve.

Hans. Yaw, my mester is de groot man, de shrieve.

Hodge. Did not I tell you, mistress? Now I may boldly say: Good-morrow to your worship.

Marg. Good-morrow, good Roger. I thank you, my good people all.—Firk, hold up thy hand: here's a three-penny piece for thy tidings.

Firk. 'Tis but three-half-pence, I think. Yes, 'tis three-pence, I smell the rose.¹ 140

Hodge. But, mistress, be ruled by me, and do not speak so pulingly.

Firk. 'Tis her worship speaks so, and not she. No, faith, mistress, speak me in the old key: 'To it, Firk,' 'there, good Firk,' 'ply your business, Hodge,' 'Hodge, with a full mouth,' 'I'll fill your bellies with good cheer.'

Enter EYRE wearing a gold chain.

Hans. See, myn liever broder, heer compt my meester.

Marg. Welcome home, Master Shrieve; I pray God continue you in health and wealth. 150

Eyre. See here, my Maggy, a chain, a gold chain for Simon Eyre. I shall make thee a lady; here's a French hood for thee; on with it, on with it! dress thy brows with this flap of a shoulder of mutton, to make thee look lovely. Where be my fine men? Roger, I'll make over my shop and tools to thee; Firk, thou shalt be the foreman; Hans, thou shalt have an hundred for twenty. Be as mad knaves as your master Sim Eyre hath been, and you shall live to be Sheriffs of London.—How dost thou like me, Margery? Prince am I none, yet am I princely born. Firk, Hodge, and Hans! 161

All three. Ay forsooth, what says your worship, Master Sheriff?

Eyre. Worship and honour, you Babylonian knaves,

¹ The threepenny piece was stamped with a rose.

for the gentle craft. But I forgot myself, I am bidden by my lord mayor to dinner to Old Ford; he's gone before, I must after. Come, Madge, on with your trinkets! Now, my true Trojans, my fine Firk, my dapper Hodge, my honest Hans, some device, some odd crotchets, some morris, or such like, for the honour of the gentleman shoemakers. Meet me at Old Ford, you know my mind. Come, Madge, away. Shut up the shop, knaves, and make holiday. [*Exeunt.*

Firk. O rare! O brave! Come, Hodge; follow me,
Hans;

175

We'll be with them for a morris-dance. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Hammon falls in love with Jane, and tells her that Ralph is dead.

ACT IV. SCENE III.—*Outside EYRE'S house.*

Enter a Serving-man.

Serv. Let me see now, the sign of the Last in Tower Street. Mass, yonder's the house. What, haw! Who's within?

Enter RALPH.

Ralph. Who calls there? What want you, sir?

Serv. Marry, I would have a pair of shoes made for a gentlewoman against to-morrow morning. What, can you do them?

Ralph. Yes, sir, you shall have them. But what length's her foot? 9

Serv. Why, you must make them in all parts like this shoe; but, at any hand, fail not to do them, for the gentlewoman is to be married very early in the morning.

Ralph. How? by this shoe must it be made? by this? Are you sure, sir, by this?

Serv. How, by this? Am I sure, by this? Art thou in thy wits? I tell thee, I must have a pair of shoes—dost thou mark me? a pair of shoes, two shoes, made by this very shoe, this same shoe, against to-morrow morning by four a clock. Dost understand me? Canst thou do't? 20

Ralph. Yea, sir, yes—I—I—I can do't. By this shoe, you say? I should know this shoe. Yea, sir, yes, by this shoe, I can do't. Four a clock, well. Whither shall I bring them?

Serv. To the sign of the Golden Ball in Watling Street; inquire for one Master Hammon, a gentleman, my master.

Ralph. Yea, sir; by this shoe, you say?

Serv. I say, Master Hammon at the Golden Ball; he's the bridegroom, and those shoes are for his bride. 30

Ralph. They shall be done by this shoe; well, well, Master Hammon at the Golden Shoe—I would say, the Golden Ball; very well, very well. But I pray you, sir, where must Master Hammon be married?

Serv. At Saint Faith's Church, under Paul's.¹ But what's that to thee? Prithee, dispatch those shoes, and so farewell. [*Exit.*]

Ralph. By this shoe, said he. How am I amazed At this strange accident! Upon my life, This was the very shoe I gave my wife 40 When I was pressed for France; since when, alas! I never could hear of her: it is the same, And Hammon's bride no other but my Jane.

Enter FIRK.

Firk. 'Snails, Ralph, thou hast lost thy part of three pots a countryman of mine gave me to breakfast.

¹ The chapel of St. Faith formed part of the crypt of Old St. Paul's.

Ralph. Firk, dost thou know this shoe?

Firk. No, by my troth; neither doth that know me!
I have no acquaintance with it, 'tis a mere stranger to me.

Ralph. Why, then I do; this shoe, I durst be sworn,
Once covered the instep of my Jane. 50
This is her size, her breadth, thus trod my love;
These true-love knots I pricked; I hold my life,
By this old shoe I shall find out my wife.

Firk. Ha, ha! Old shoe, that wert new! How a
murrain came this ague-fit of foolishness upon thee?

Ralph. Thus, Firk: even now here came a serving-
man;
By this shoe would he have a new pair made
Against to-morrow morning for his mistress,
That's to be married to a gentleman. 60
And why may not this be my sweet Jane?

Firk. And why may'st not thou be my sweet ass? Ha,
ha!

Ralph. Well, laugh and spare not! But the truth is
this:
Against to-morrow morning I'll provide
A lusty crew of honest shoemakers,
To watch the going of the bride to church.
If she prove Jane, I'll take her in despite
From Hammon and the devil, were he by.
If it be not my Jane, what remedy? 70
Hereof I am sure, I shall live till I die. [*Exit.*

Firk. Well, God sends fools fortune, and it may be he
may light upon his matrimony by such a device; for
wedding and hanging goes by destiny. [*Exit.*

ACT IV. SCENE V.—*A Room in the Lord Mayor's House.**Enter SYBIL.*

Sybil. O Lord! Help, for God's sake! my mistress;
oh, my young mistress!

L. Mayor. Where is thy mistress? What's become of
her?

Sybil. She's gone, she's fled!

L. Mayor. Gone! Whither is she fled?

Sybil. I know not, forsooth; she's fled out of doors
with Hans the shoemaker; I saw them scud, scud, scud,
apace, apace! 9

L. Mayor. Which way? What, John! Where be my
men? Which way?

Sybil. I know not, an it please your worship.

L. Mayor. Fled with a shoemaker? Can this be true?

Sybil. O Lord, sir, as true as God's in Heaven.

Lincoln. Her love turned shoemaker? I am glad of
this.

L. Mayor. A Fleming butter-box, a shoemaker!
Will she forget her birth, requite my care
With such ingratitude? Scorned she young Hammon
To love a honniken¹, a needy knave? 20
Well, let her fly, I'll not fly after her,
Let her starve, if she will; she's none of mine.

Lincoln. Be not so cruel, sir.

They ask Firk if he can tell them anything of the matter.

Firk. I never go to church, but I know the name of
it; it is a swearing church—stay a while, 'tis—ay, by the
mass, no, no,—'tis—ay, by my troth, no, nor that; 'tis
—ay, by my faith, that, that, 'tis, ay, by my Faith's
Church under Paul's Cross. There they shall be knit
like a pair of stockings in matrimony.

¹ Sc. 'honeykin', sweetheart.

Lincoln. Upon my life, my nephew Lacy walks
In the disguise of this Dutch shoemaker. 30

Firk. Yes, forsooth.

Lincoln. Doth he not, honest fellow?

Firk. No, forsooth; I think Hans is nobody but Hans,
no spirit.

L. Mayor. My mind misgives me now, 'tis so, indeed.

ACT V.

Eyre is chosen to succeed Rose's father as Lord Mayor.

ACT V. SCENE II.—*A Street near St. Faith's Church.*

*Enter HODGE, FIRK, RALPH, and five or six Shoemakers,
all with cudgels or such weapons.*

Hodge. Come, Ralph; stand to it, Firk. My masters,
as we are the brave bloods of the shoemakers, heirs ap-
parent to Saint Hugh, and perpetual benefactors to all
good fellows, thou shalt have no wrong; were Hammon
a king of spades, he should not delve in thy close without
thy sufferance. But tell me, Ralph, art thou sure 'tis thy
wife? 7

Ralph. Am I sure this is Firk? This morning, when
I stroked on her shoes, I looked upon her, and she upon
me, and sighed, asked me if ever I knew one Ralph.
Yes, said I. For his sake, said she—tears standing in
her eyes—and for thou art somewhat like him, spend this
piece of gold. I took it; my lame leg and my travel be-
yond sea made me unknown. All is one for that: I
know she's mine. 15

Firk. Did she give thee this gold? Oh, glorious glit-
tering gold! She's thine own, 'tis thy wife, and she loves
thee; for I'll stand to't, there's no woman will give gold
to any man, but she thinks better of him than she thinks
of them she gives silver to. And for Hammon, neither

Hammon nor hangman shall wrong thee in London. Is not our old Master Eyre lord mayor? Speak, my hearts.

All. Yes, and Hammon shall know it to his cost.

[*Enter HAMMON, his Serving-man, JANE and Others.*]

Hodge. Peace, my bullies; yonder they come.

Ralph. Stand to't, my hearts. Firk, let me speak first.

Hodge. No, Ralph, let me.—Hammon, whither away so early?

Ham. Unmannerly, rude slave, what's that to thee?

Firk. To him, sir? Yes, sir, and to me, and others. Good-morrow, Jane, how dost thou? Good Lord, how the world is changed with you! God be thanked! 31

Ham. Villains, hands off! How dare you touch my love?

All. Villains? Down with them! Cry clubs for prentices!

Hodge. Hold, my hearts! Touch her, Hammon? Yea, and more than that: we'll carry her away with us. My masters and gentlemen, never draw your bird-spits; shoe-makers are steel to the back, men every inch of them, all spirit. 40

Those of Hammon's side. Well, and what of all this?

Hodge. I'll show you.—Jane, dost thou know this man? 'Tis Ralph, I can tell thee; nay, 'tis he in faith, though he be lamed by the wars. Yet look not strange, but run to him, fold him about the neck and kiss him.

Jane. Lives then my husband? O God, let me go, Let me embrace my Ralph.

Ham. What means my Jane?

Jane. Nay, what meant you, to tell me he was slain?

Ham. Pardon me, dear love, for being misled.

(*To RALPH.*) 'Twas rumoured here in London thou wert dead. 50

Firk. Thou seest he lives. Lass, go, pack home with him. Now, Master Hammon, where's your mistress, your wife?

Serv. 'Swounds, master, fight for her! Will you thus lose her?

All. Down with that creature! Clubs! Down with him!

Hodge. Hold, hold!

Ham. Hold, fool! Sirs, he shall do no wrong.
Will my Jane leave me thus, and break her faith? 60

Firk. Yea, sir! She must, sir! She shall, sir! What then? Mend it!

Hodge. Hark, fellow Ralph, follow my counsel: set the wench in the midst, and let her choose her man, and let her be his woman.

Jane. Whom should I choose? Whom should my thoughts affect
But him whom Heaven hath made to be my love?
Thou art my husband, and these humble weeds
Make thee more beautiful than all his wealth. 70
Therefore, I will but put off his attire,
Returning it into the owner's hand,
And after ever be thy constant wife.

Hodge. Not a rag, Jane! The law's on our side; he that sows in another man's ground forfeits his harvest. Get thee home, Ralph; follow him, Jane; he shall not have so much as a busk-point from thee.

Firk. Stand to that, Ralph; the appurtenances are thine own. Hammon, look not at her!

Serv. O 'swounds, no! 80

Firk. Blue coat, be quiet, we'll give you a new livery else; we'll make Shrove Tuesday Saint George's Day for you. Look not, Hammon, leer not! I'll firk you! For thy head now, one glance, one sheep's eye, anything, at

her ! Touch not a rag, lest I and my brethren beat you to clouts.

Serv. Come, Master Hammon, there's no striving here.

Enter the EARL OF LINCOLN, the LORD MAYOR and Servants.

Lincoln. Yonder's the lying varlet mocked us so.

L. Mayor. Come hither, sirrah !

Firk. I, sir ? I am sirrah ? You mean me, do you not ?

Lincoln. Where is my nephew married ? 91

Firk. Is he married ? God give him joy, I am glad of it. They have a fair day, and the sign is in a good planet, Mars in Venus.

L. Mayor. Villain, thou told'st me that my daughter
Rose

This morning should be married at Saint Faith's ;
We have watched there these three hours at the least,
Yet see we no such thing. 99

Firk. Truly, I am sorry for't ; a bride's a pretty thing.

Hodge. Come to the purpose. Yonder's the bride and
bridegroom you look for, I hope. Though you be lords,
you are not to bar by your authority men from women,
are you ?

L. Mayor. See, see, my daughter's masked.

Lincoln. True, and my nephew,
To hide his guilt, counterfeits him lame.

Firk. Yea, truly ; God help the poor couple, they are
lame and blind.

L. Mayor. I'll ease her blindness.

Lincoln. I'll his lameness cure.

Firk. Lie down, sirs, and laugh ! My fellow Ralph is
taken for Rowland Lacy, and Jane for Mistress Damask
Rose. This is all my knavery. 112

L. Mayor. What, have I found you, minion ?

Lincoln. Oh, base wretch !
Nay, hide thy face, the horror of thy guilt
Can hardly be washed off. Where are thy powers ?
What battles have you made ? O yes, I see,
Thou fought'st with Shame, and Shame hath conquered
thee.

This lameness will not serve.

L. Mayor. Unmask yourself.

Lincoln. Lead home your daughter.

L. Mayor. Take your nephew hence.

Ralph. Hence ! 'Swounds, what mean you ? Are you
mad ? I hope you cannot enforce my wife from me.
Where's Hammon ? 122

L. Mayor. Your wife ?

Lincoln. What, Hammon ?

Ralph. Yea, my wife ; and, therefore, the proudest of
you that lays hands on her first, I'll lay my crutch 'cross
his pate.

Firk. To him, lame Ralph ! Here's brave sport !

Ralph. Rose, call you her ? Why, her name is Jane.
Look here else : do you know her now ? [*Unmasking JANE.*

Lincoln. Is this your daughter ?

L. Mayor. No, nor this your nephew.
My Lord of Lincoln, we are both abused 132
By this base, crafty varlet.

Firk. Yea, forsooth, no varlet ; forsooth, no base ;
forsooth, I am but mean ; no crafty neither, but of the
gentle craft.

L. Mayor. Where is my daughter Rose ? Where is my
child ?

Lincoln. Where is my nephew Lacy married ?

Firk. Why, here is good laced mutton, as I promised
you.

Lincoln. Villain, I'll have thee punished for this wrong.

Frk. Punish the journeyman villain, but not the journeyman shoemaker. 144

Enter DODGER.

Dodger. My lord, I come to bring unwelcome news.
Your nephew Lacy and your daughter Rose
Early this morning wedded at the Savoy,
None being present but the lady mayoress.
Besides, I learnt among the officers,
The lord mayor vows to stand in their defence 150
'Gainst any that shall seek to cross the match.

Lincoln. Dares Eyre the shoemaker uphold the deed?

Frk. Yes, sir, shoemakers dare stand in a woman's quarrel, I warrant you, as deep as another, and deeper too.

Dodger. Besides, his grace to-day dines with the mayor ;
Who on his knees humbly intends to fall
And beg a pardon for your nephew's fault.

Lincoln. But I'll prevent him ! Come, Sir Roger Oateley ; 160

The king will do us justice in this cause.
Howe'er their hands have made them man and wife,
I will disjoin the match, or lose my life. [*Exeunt.*]

Eyre wins pardon for the lovers. Lacy is knighted, and the play ends in general feasting.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMEDY OF IMAGINATION

THE last three of Shakespeare's plays are *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. All are marked by a special tenderness, particularly in the treatment of women, and by a special magic and melody of verse; in all alike the frontier-line of comedy and tragedy is curiously thin and impalpable. According to Mr. Sidney Lee they stand 'in a category of their own, apart from both': at any rate we feel it a somewhat arbitrary classification which ranges *Cymbeline* on the one side and *A Winter's Tale* on the other. Yet there is here no direct break with his past methods. Throughout his whole career Shakespeare had set his seal on a type of comedy which was poetic, romantic, imaginative: in *All's Well that Ends Well*, in *As You Like It*, still more in *Measure for Measure*, he traversed the stages along a line of development which, in his three latest dramas, arrives at its culmination. On this path scarcely one of his contemporaries even tried to follow him. Set any of Jonson's women beside Miranda or Hermione; set any passage from a comedy of Dekker or Chapman beside the flower-speech, or Prospero's farewell, or Imogen's appeal to Pisanio:—the difference is not one of degree, it is one of kind; the contrast of poetry with prose is hardly more salient. To much of Shakespeare's characterization we may find plenty of rough analogues in the drama of his day: to this conception of comedy as a theme for pure poetic expression there are almost none.

The most remarkable exception to this rule, the comedy which on this side approaches most nearly to Shakespeare's manner, is the first work with which Beaumont and Fletcher established their reputation as dramatists. *Philaster*, which preceded *Cymbeline* by two years, is animated by much the same spirit as the comedies of Shakespeare's middle period: it bears the same relation to *Twelfth Night* as Bellario to Viola. The workmanship is thinner, the invention less rich, the characterization twice breaks down at a critical point¹; there are a hundred faults of bad taste and inexperience; but it is impossible to deny that the work is poetry, and, at its best, poetry of a high order. *Philaster's* description of the boy by the fountain-side has deservedly become a classic: beside it are other exquisite passages which, like the flowers in Bellario's garland, 'delight by the rareness.' It is little wonder that the hands which gathered them should have written one of the sweetest of English pastorals and one of the most graceful of English masques.

To ascribe the portions of this play to their respective authors would be to enter upon an endless conflict. Almost every variety of opinion has been expressed, including one, which we believe to be entirely untenable, that it was the unaided work of Beaumont. The materials for forming a decision are briefly as follows. Two dramas, the *Woman-Hater* and the *Inns of Court Masque*, are commonly attributed to Beaumont alone. Eight (apart from the 'four moral representations') are pretty certainly the results of the partnership. All the rest were written either by Fletcher alone or by Fletcher in concert with other dramatists. In no play written after 1616 can Beaumont have had any hand, for the

¹ 'In depicting woman's heroism,' says Mr. Bullen, 'Fletcher always overshoots the mark.' For instances see *Philaster*, Act IV. sc. iii, l. 17, and Act V. sc. v, l. 186.

simple reason that he died in that year; and the amount of work which is covered by this delimitation may be gauged by reference to the chronological list here appended.

Of the two men, Beaumont is to us the more clearly visible. He possessed a firm and sound judgement; we are told that Jonson used to submit to his censure, and Aubrey states, unfairly, that 'his main business was to correct the overflowings of Mr. Fletcher's wit'. His chief strength is in tragedy, his comic power lies mainly in the direction of burlesque, and the melody of his blank verse is particularly suave and musical. Fletcher seems to have excelled in wit and repartee, in the delineation of comic and even farcical scenes, like the duel, for example, in the *Little French Lawyer*, and in a loose flexible declamatory style which enabled him, in his later works, to dispense altogether with the use of prose dialogue. Beyond this we become entangled in a maze of contradictions. Dryden frequently couples him with Shakespeare, and on some points gives him the preference; Mr. Swinburne speaks of the 'fairyl-land of dazzling fancy which Shakespeare and Fletcher alone trod'; yet in the plays which followed Beaumont's death there is in many respects a sensible deterioration. The lyrics are often wonderful: on this point the comparison even with Shakespeare may be allowed to stand: but the characterization grows more uncertain, the plot more artificial, and the fun, though often extraordinarily witty, often sinks to a level of grossness which is far below the rough healthy animalism of the Elizabethan stage. The *Spanish Curate*, for example, can only be condoned on the plea which Charles Lamb offered for the comedies of the Restoration. Take it as real life and it is no longer a matter for wholesome jesting: if Shakespeare had treated the subject he would have made it a tragedy.

In the days of the Restoration Beaumont and Fletcher were the most popular among English dramatists. 'Their plots,' says Dryden¹, 'were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death. . . . Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all Love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection: what words have since been taken in are superfluous rather than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted throughout the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's: the reason is because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies and pathos in their more serious plays which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.' A century later they had suffered from the change of taste, and the elder Colman mentions that in 1763 an attempt was made to revive the *Spanish Curate*, without success. But among all vicissitudes a few plays have always maintained high rank as literature: their *Wild-Goose Chase* is still as ever 'a feast of mirth', their *Knight of the Burning Pestle* is still one of the most admirable burlesques in the language; and no popular verdict can ever antiquate the dignity of *A King and No King*, the pathos of the *Maid's Tragedy*, or the romantic feeling and silver eloquence of their greatest comedy, *Philaster*.

NOTE.—The comedies between 1608 and the end of our period in which Beaumont and Fletcher took part are chronicled on the next page. Among contemporary works of the same class, the most notable, apart from Shakespeare, are Jonson's *Silent*

¹ *Essay of Dramatic Poesie*, written 1667.

Woman (1609), *Alchemist* (1610), and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614); Middleton's *Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608), *No Help like a Woman's* (1613), and *A Game at Chess* (1624); Massinger's *New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625), famous for the character of Sir Giles Overreach; and Heywood's *Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (1638). In these almost every type is represented. The examples of Jonson and Massinger are mainly comedies of 'humour': the first of Middleton's is a brisk exposure of somewhat rascally manners, the second is a pure example of artificial romance, the third a witty and outspoken satire on the projected Spanish marriage. Heywood, whom Lamb describes as 'a sort of prose Shakespeare', attempts to combine the comedy of manners with a rather prosaic use of the supernatural. But the one kind which, outside the work of Beaumont and Fletcher, is conspicuously absent is the poetic and imaginative comedy: the Shakespearian domain into which they alone of his companions had the skill to enter.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT (1584-1616) was the son of Francis Beaumont, Judge of the Common Pleas, and younger brother of Sir John Beaumont, scholar and religious poet. In 1596 he entered Broadgates Hall (now Pembroke College), Oxford, but after residing for two years left the University without taking a degree, and in 1600 entered at the Inner Temple. Soon after his arrival in London he formed a close friendship with Jonson and Drayton, joined the famous circle at the Mermaid Tavern, and began his literary career with the poem of *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* (1602). In 1607 he wrote the commendatory verses prefixed to Jonson's *Volpone*, and attacked the stage on his own account with a burlesque comedy called *The Woman-Hater*¹. About the same time he made the acquaintance of JOHN FLETCHER (1579-1625), with whom he formed an intimacy so close that the two friends shared everything in common, 'even to their clothes,' and with whom he collaborated for a period of seven years. Fletcher was the son of Dr. Richard Fletcher, Vicar of Rye and afterwards Bishop of London.

¹ Dyce assigns this play to Fletcher: other writers have supposed that Fletcher had a hand in it, but the weight of internal evidence is on the side of Beaumont.

Nothing is known for certain about his early life, but it is probable that he was educated at St. Benet's College (now Corpus Christi), Cambridge, that he came to London shortly after his graduation, and that he was introduced to Beaumont by Jonson.

The plays which can be most confidently assigned to this collaboration are the *Four Moral Representations*, called respectively the Triumph of Honour, of Love, of Death, and of Time (1608), *Philaster* (probably 1608), the *Scornful Lady* (1609), the *Maid's Tragedy* (about 1610), the *Second Maid's Tragedy* (1611), *A King and No King* (1611), the *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (published in 1618, probably written in 1611), *Cupid's Revenge* (1612), and the *Coxcomb* (1618). During these same years each of the two contributed separately to the literature of pastoral comedy and masque, Fletcher with the *Faithful Shepherdess* (1610), Beaumont with the *Masque of the Inner Temple*, written for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth in February, 1612. In 1614 Beaumont gave up the stage, and two years afterwards he died.

Fifteen plays are attributed to Fletcher alone. Of these the most notable are *Wit without Money* (1614), *Bonduca* and *Valentinian* (both before 1619), the *Humorous Lieutenant* (about 1620), the *Pilgrim* (1621), much admired by Coleridge, the *Wild-Goose Chase* (1621), imitated by Farquhar, *Monsieur Thomas* (about 1622), the *Woman's Prize*, a counterblast to the *Taming of the Shrew* (about 1623), and *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, licensed for performance in 1624. Of the plays which he wrote in collaboration with other dramatists the first two have a special historical importance. In 1613 appeared the *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII*, both of which have been ascribed to Shakespeare, and in both of which there are clear evidences of Shakespeare's hand.¹ For the last seven years of his life Fletcher principally collaborated with Philip Massinger (1588-1640); and to this partnership may be attributed the *Knight of Malta* (1618), the *Little French Lawyer* (about 1620), *A Very Woman* (probably written by Fletcher about 1620 and revised

¹ *Henry VIII* is still commonly included among Shakespeare's works: the *Two Noble Kinsmen* bears on its title-page the statement that it was written by Shakespeare and Fletcher.

by Massinger in 1634), the *Laws of Candy* (1621 or 1622), the *Spanish Curate* (1622), the *Elder Brother* (1625), and a few more dramas. About half a dozen comedies, mostly of his later period, show to a greater or less degree the handiwork of Rowley, Middleton, and Shirley.

It must be added that the evidence of these attributions is almost wholly internal, and that much of it is still a matter of controversy. The conclusions here presented are those to which the chief weight of testimony inclines, but the question is not one which admits of absolute certainty or conviction.

PHILASTER

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

KING.	Guard, Attendants.
PHILASTER, Heir to the Crown of Sicily.	ARETHUSA, Daughter of the King.
PHARAMOND, Prince of Spain.	EUPHRASIA, Daughter of Dion, disguised as a Page under the name of Bellario.
DION, a Lord.	MEGRA, a Court Lady.
CLEREMONT.	GALATEA, a Lady attending the Princess.
THRASILINE.	Two other Ladies.
An old Captain.	
Citizens.	
A Country Fellow.	
Two Woodmen.	

[*Scene: Messina and its neighbourhood.*]

The King of Calabria deposes the King of Sicily. His successor keeps Philaster, the rightful heir of Sicily, at his court, not daring to put him to death or imprison him because he is greatly beloved by the people.

The first Act opens with the coming of the Spanish Prince to woo the Lady Arethusa. Philaster, who is himself in love with the Princess, defies Pharamond in the King's presence. Arethusa sends for him.

ACT I. SCENE II.—ARETHUSA'S *Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter ARETHUSA and a Lady.

Are. Comes he not?

Lady. Madam?

Are. Will Philaster come?

Lady. Dear madam, you were wont to credit me
At first.

Are. But didst thou tell me so?
I am forgetful, and my woman's strength
Is so o'ercharged with dangers like to grow
About my marriage, that these under-things
Dare not abide in such a troubled sea. 10
How looked he when he told thee he would come?

Lady. Why, well.

Are. And not a little fearful?

Lady. Fear, madam! sure, he knows not what it is.

Are. You are all of his faction; the whole court
Is bold in praise of him; whilst I
May live neglected, and do noble things,
As fools in strife throw gold into the sea,
Drowned in the doing. But I know he fears.

Lady. Fear, madam! methought his looks hid more
Of love than fear. 21

Are. Of love! to whom? to you?
Did you deliver those plain words I sent
With such a winning gesture and quick look
That you have caught him?

Lady. Madam, I mean to you.

Are. Of love to me! alas, thy ignorance
Lets thee not see the crosses of our births!
Nature, that loves not to be questioned
Why she did this or that, but has her ends, 30
And knows she does well, never gave the world

Two things so opposite, so contrary,
As he and I am : if a bowl of blood,
Drawn from this arm of mine, would poison thee,
A draught of his would cure thee. Of love to me !

Lady. Madam, I think I hear him.

Are. Bring him in. [*Exit* Lady.]

You gods, that would not have your dooms withstood,
Whose holy wisdoms at this time it is
To make the passion of a feeble maid 40
The way unto your justice, I obey.

Re-enter Lady with PHILASTER.

Lady. Here is my Lord Philaster.

Are. Oh, 'tis well.

Withdraw yourself. [*Exit* Lady.]

Phi. Madam, your messenger
Made me believe you wished to speak with me.

Are. 'Tis true, Philaster ; but the words are such
I have to say, and do so ill beseem
The mouth of woman, that I wish them said,
And yet am loath to speak them. Have you known 50
That I have aught detracted from your worth ?
Have I in person wronged you ? or have set
My baser instruments to throw disgrace
Upon your virtues ?

Phi. Never, madam, you.

Are. Why, then, should you, in such a public place,
Injure a princess, and a scandal lay
Upon my fortunes, famed to be so great,
Calling a great part of my dowry in question ?

Phi. Madam, this truth which I shall speak will be 60
Foolish : but, for your fair and virtuous self,
I could afford myself to have no right
To any thing you wished.

Are. Philaster, know,

I must enjoy these kingdoms.

Phi. Madam, both ?

Are. Both, or I die : by fate, I die, Philaster,
If I not calmly may enjoy them both.

Phi. I would do much to save that noble life :
Yet would be loath to have posterity
Find in our stories that Philaster gave
His right unto a sceptre and a crown
To save a lady's longing.

70

Are. Nay, then, hear :

I must and will have them, and more——

Phi. What more ?

Are. Or lose that little life the gods prepared
To trouble this poor piece of earth withal.

Phi. Madam, what more ?

Are. Turn, then, away thy face.

80

Phi. I can endure it. Turn away my face !

I never yet saw enemy that looked
So dreadfully, but that I thought myself
As great a basilisk as he ; or spake
So horribly, but that I thought my tongue
Bore thunder underneath, as much as his ;
Nor beast that I could turn from : shall I then
Begin to fear sweet sounds ? a lady's voice,
Whom I do love ? Say, you would have my life ;
Why, I will give it you ; for 'tis to me
A thing so loathed, and unto you that ask
Of so poor use, that I shall make no price :
If you entreat, I will unmovedly hear.

90

Are. Yet, for my sake, a little bend thy looks.

Phi. I do.

Are. Then know, I must have them and thee.

Phi. And me ?

Are. Thy love ; without which, all the land

Discovered yet will serve me for no use

But to be buried in.

100

Phi. Is't possible?

Are. With it, it were too little to bestow
On thee. Now, though thy breath do strike me dead
(Which, know, it may), I have unript my breast.

Phi. Madam, you are too full of noble thoughts
To lay a train for this condemn'd life,
Which you may have for asking: to suspect
Were base, where I deserve no ill. Love you!
By all my hopes, I do, above my life!

But how this passion should proceed from you

110

So violently would amaze a man

That would be jealous.

Are. Another soul into my body shot
Could not have filled me with more strength and spirit
Than this thy breath. But spend not hasty time
In seeking how I came thus: 'tis the gods,
The gods, that make me so; and, sure, our love
Will be the nobler and the better blest,
In that the secret justice of the gods

Is mingled with it. Let us leave, and kiss;

120

Lest some unwelcome guest should fall betwixt us.

And we should part without it.

Phi. 'Twill be ill

I should abide here long.

Are. 'Tis true; and worse

You should come often. How shall we devise

To hold intelligence, that our true loves,

On any new occasion, may agree

What path is best to tread?

Phi. I have a boy,

130

Sent by the gods, I hope, to this intent

Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the buck,

I found him sitting by a fountain's side,
Of which he borrowed some to quench his thirst,
And paid the nymph again as much in tears.
A garland lay him by, made by himself
Of many several flowers bred in the vale,
Stuck in that mystic order that the rareness
Delighted me: but ever when he turned
His tender eyes upon 'em, he would weep, 140
As if he meant to make 'em grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I asked him all his story:
He told me that his parents gentle died,
Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots; and of the crystal springs,
Which did not stop their courses; and the sun,
Which still, he thanked him, yielded him his light.
Then took he up his garland, and did show
What every flower, as country-people hold, 150
Did signify, and how all, ordered thus,
Expressed his grief; and, to my thoughts, did read
The prettiest lecture of his country-art
That could be wished: so that methought I could
Have studied it. I gladly entertained
Him, who was glad to follow; and have got
The trustiest, loving'st, and the gentlest boy
That ever master kept. Him will I send
To wait on you, and bear our hidden love.

ACT II. SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter PHILASTER and BELLARIO.

Phi. And thou shalt find her honourable, boy;
Full of regard unto thy tender youth,
For thine own modesty; and, for my sake,
Apter to give than thou wilt be to ask,

Aye, or deserve.

Bel. Sir, you did take me up
 When I was nothing ; and only yet am something
 By being yours. You trusted me unknown ;
 And that which you were apt to construe
 A simple innocence in me, perhaps 10
 Might have been craft, the cunning of a boy
 Hardened in lies and theft : yet ventured you
 To part my miseries and me ; for which
 I never can expect to serve a lady
 That bears more honour in her breast than you.

Phi. But, boy, it will prefer thee. Thou art young,
 And bear'st a childish overflowing love
 To them that clap thy cheeks and speak thee fair yet ;
 But when thy judgement comes to rule those passions,
 Thou wilt remember best those careful friends 20
 That placed thee in the noblest way of life.
 She is a princess I prefer thee to.

Bel. In that small time that I have seen the world,
 I never knew a man hasty to part with
 A servant he thought trusty : I remember,
 My father would prefer the boys he kept
 To greater men than he ; but did it not
 Till they were grown too saucy for himself.

Phi. Why, gentle boy, I find no fault at all
 In thy behaviour. 30

Bel. Sir, if I have made
 A fault in ignorance, instruct my youth :
 I shall be willing, if not apt, to learn ;
 Age and experience will adorn my mind
 With larger knowledge ; and if I have done
 A wilful fault, think me not past all hope
 For once. What master holds so strict a hand
 Over his boy, that he will part with him

Without one warning ? Let me be corrected,
To break my stubbornness, if it be so, 40
Rather than turn me off ; and I shall mend.

Phi. Thy love doth plead so prettily to stay,
That, trust me, I could weep to part with thee.
Alas, I do not turn thee off ! thou know'st
It is my business that doth call thee hence ;
And when thou art with her, thou dwell'st with me.
Think so, and 'tis so : and when time is full,
That thou hast well discharged this heavy trust,
Laid on so weak a one, I will again
With joy receive thee ; as I live, I will ! 50
Nay, weep not, gentle boy. 'Tis more than time
Thou didst attend the Princess.

Bel. I am gone.
But since I am to part with you, my lord,
And none knows whether I shall live to do
More service for you, take this little prayer :
Heaven bless your loves, your fights, all your designs !
May sick men, if they have your wish, be well ;
And Heaven hate those you curse, though I be one ! 59
[*Exit.*

ACT II. SCENE III.—*ARETHUSA's Apartment in the Palace.*

*Enter ARETHUSA and a Lady. To them enter
BELLARIO, richly dressed.*

Are. Sir, 10
You are sad to change your service ; is't not so ?
Bel. Madam, I have not changed ; I wait on you,
To do him service.

Are. Thou disclaim'st in me.
Tell me thy name.

Bel. Bellario.

Are. Thou canst sing and play ?

Bel. If grief will give me leave, madam, I can.

Are. Alas, what kind of grief can thy years know? 10
Hadst thou a curst master when thou went'st to school?
Thou art not capable of other grief;
Thy brows and cheeks are smooth as waters be
When no breath troubles them: believe me, boy,
Care seeks out wrinkled brows and hollow eyes,
And builds himself caves, to abide in them.
Come, sir, tell me truly, does your lord love me?

Bel. Love, madam! I know not what it is.

Are. Canst thou know grief, and never yet knew'st love?
Thou art deceived, boy. Does he speak of me 20
As if he wished me well?

Bel. If it be love
To forget all respect of his own friends
In thinking of your face; if it be love
To sit cross-armed and sigh away the day,
Mingled with starts, crying your name as loud
And hastily as men i' the streets do fire;
If it be love to weep himself away
When he but hears of any lady dead
Or killed, because it might have been your chance; 30
If, when he goes to rest (which will not be),
'Twixt every prayer he says, to name you once,
As others drop a bead, be to be in love,
Then, madam, I dare swear he loves you.

Are. Oh, you're a cunning boy, and taught to lie
For your lord's credit! but thou know'st a lie
That bears this sound is welcomer to me
Than any truth that says he loves me not.
Lead the way, boy.—Do you attend me too. — 39
'Tis thy lord's business hastes me thus. Away! [*Exeunt.*]

Pharamond pays court to Megra. Arethusa discovers them and tells the King, who is furious at the insult to his daughter.

Megra in revenge declares that Arethusa is in love with Bellario. The report spreads, and certain of the nobles urge Philaster to rebel, telling him that the King is hated, and that the Princess has now lost all her former popularity. Philaster at first refuses to listen to a word against Arethusa, but he is at last persuaded that she is false to him.

ACT III. SCENE II.—ARETHUSA'S *Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter PHILASTER.

Phi. Peace to your fairest thoughts, dearest mistress !

Are. Oh, my dearest servant, I have a war within me !

Phi. He must be more than man that makes these
crystals

Run into rivers. Sweetest fair, the cause ?

And, as I am your slave, tied to your goodness,

Your creature, made again from what I was

And newly-spirited, I'll right your honour.

Are. Oh, my best love, that boy !

Phi. What boy ?

Are. That pretty boy you gave me——

10

Phi. What of him ?

Are. Must be no more mine.

Phi. Why ?

Are. They are jealous of him.

Phi. Jealous ! who ?

Are. The King.

Phi. Oh, my fortune !

Then 'tis idle jealousy. [*Aside.*]—Let him go.

Are. Oh, cruel !

Are you hard-hearted too ? who shall now tell you 20

How much I loved you ? who shall swear it to you,

And weep the tears I send ? who shall now bring you

Letters, rings, bracelets ? lose his health in service ?

Wake tedious nights in stories of your praise ?

Who shall now sing your crying elegies,
And strike a sad soul into senseless pictures,
And make them mourn ? who shall take up his lute,
And touch it till he crown a silent sleep
Upon my eye-lids, making me dream, and cry,
'Oh, my dear, dear Philaster !'

30

Phi. Oh, my heart !

Would he had broken thee, that made me know
This lady was not loyal ! [*Aside.*]—Mistress,
Forget the boy ; I'll get thee a far better.

Are. Oh, never, never such a boy again
As my Bellario !

Phi. 'Tis but your fond affection.

Are. With thee, my boy, farewell for ever
All secrecy in servants ! Farewell faith,
And all desire to do well for itself !

40

Let all that shall succeed thee for thy wrongs
Sell and betray chaste love !

Phi. And all this passion for a boy ?

Are. He was your boy, and you put him to me,
And the loss of such must have a mourning for.

Phi. Oh, thou forgetful woman !

Are. How, my lord ?

Phi. False Arethusa !

Hast thou a medicine to restore my wits,
When I have lost 'em ? If not, leave to talk.

50

Now you may take that little right I have
To this poor kingdom : give it to your joy ;
For I have no joy in it. Some far place,
Where never womankind durst set her foot
For bursting with her poisons, must I seek,
And live to curse you :
There dig a cave, and preach to birds and beasts

What woman is, and help to save them from you ;
 How heaven is in your eyes, but in your hearts
 More hell than hell has ; how your tongues, like scorpions,
 Both heal and poison ; how your thoughts are woven 61
 With thousand changes in one subtle web,
 And worn so by you ; how that foolish man,
 That reads the story of a woman's face
 And dies believing it, is lost for ever ;
 How all the good you have is but a shadow,
 I' the morning with you, and at night behind you
 Past and forgotten ; how your vows are frosts,
 Fast for a night, and with the next sun gone ;
 How you are, being taken all together, 70
 A mere confusion, and so dead a chaos,
 That love cannot distinguish. These sad texts,
 Till my last hour, I am bound to utter of you.
 So, farewell all my woe, all my delight ! [Exit.

Are. Be merciful, ye gods, and strike me dead !
 What way have I deserved this ? Make my breast
 Transparent as pure crystal, that the world,
 Jealous of me, may see the foulest thought
 My heart holds. Where shall a woman turn her eyes
 To find out constancy ?

Enter BELLARIO.

Save me, how black 80
 And guiltily, methinks, that boy looks now !
 Oh, thou dissembler, that, before thou spak'st,
 Wert in thy cradle false, sent to make lies
 And betray innocents ! Thy lord and thou
 May glory in the ashes of a maid
 Fooled by her passion ; but the conquest is
 Nothing so great as wicked. Fly away !
 Let my command force thee to that which shame

Would do without it. If thou understood'st
The loathed office thou hast undergone, 90
Why, thou wouldst hide thee under heaps of hills,
Lest men should dig and find thee.

Bel. Oh, what god,
Angry with men, hath sent this strange disease
Into the noblest minds! Madam, this grief
You add unto me is no more than drops
To seas, for which they are not seen to swell;
My lord hath struck his anger through my heart,
And let out all the hope of future joys.
You need not bid me fly; I came to part, 100
To take my latest leave. Farewell for ever!
I durst not run away in honesty
From such a lady, like a boy that stole
Or made some grievous fault. The power of gods
Assist you in your sufferings! Hasty time
Reveal the truth to your abused lord
And mine, that he may know your worth; whilst I
Go seek out some forgotten place to die! [*Exit BELLARIO.*

Are. Peace guide thee! Thou hast overthrown me
once;
Yet, if I had another Troy to lose, 110
Thou, or another villain with thy looks,
Might talk me out of it, and send me naked,
My hair dishevelled, through the fiery streets.

Enter a Lady.

Lady. Madam, the King would hunt, and calls for you
With earnestness.

Are. I am in tune to hunt!
Diana, if thou canst rage with a maid
As with a man, let me discover thee
Bathing, and turn me to a fearful hind,

That I may die pursued by cruel hounds, 120
And have my story written in my wounds! [*Exeunt.*]

On the hunting party Arethusa is lost in the forest, where she is met by Philaster.

ACT IV. SCENE III.—*Another part of the Forest.*

Enter a Country Fellow.

C. Fell. I'll see the King, if he be in the forest; I have hunted him these two hours; if I should come home and not see him, my sisters would laugh at me. I can see nothing but people better horsed than myself, that out-ride me; I can hear nothing but shouting. These kings had need of good brains; this whooping is able to put a mean man out of his wits. There's a courtier with his sword drawn; by this hand, upon a woman, I think!

[*Aside.*]

Phi. Are you at peace?

Are. With heaven and earth. 10

Phi. May they divide thy soul and body! [*Wounds her.*]

C. Fell. Hold, dastard! strike a woman! Thou'rt a craven, I warrant thee: thou wouldst be loath to play half a dozen venies¹ at wasters² with a good fellow for a broken head.

Phi. Leave us, good friend.

Are. What ill-bred man art thou, to intrude thyself Upon our private sports, our recreations?

C. Fell. God 'uds me, I understand you not; but I know the rogue has hurt you. 20

Phi. Pursue thy own affairs: it will be ill To multiply blood upon my head; which thou Wilt force me to.

C. Fell. I know not your rhetoric; but I can lay it on, if you touch the woman.

¹ bouts.

² cudgels.

Phi. Slave, take what thou deservest ! *[They fight.]*

Are. Heavens guard my lord !

C. Fell. Oh, do you breathe ?

Phi. I hear the tread of people. I am hurt :
The gods take part against me : could this boor 30
Have held me thus else ? I must shift for life,
Though I do loathe it. I would find a course
To lose it rather by my will than force. *[Aside and exit.]*

C. Fell. I cannot follow the rogue. I pray thee, wench,
come and kiss me now.

*Enter PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, THRASILINE,
and Woodmen.*

Pha. What art thou ?

C. Fell. Almost killed I am for a foolish woman ; a
knave has hurt her.

Pha. The princess, gentlemen !—Where's the wound,
madam !
Is it dangerous ? 40

Are. He has not hurt me.

C. Fell. I' faith, she lies ; h'as hurt her in the breast ;
look else.

Pha. Oh, sacred spring of innocent blood !

Dion. 'Tis above wonder ! who should dare this ?

Are. I felt it not.

Pha. Speak, villain, who has hurt the princess ?

C. Fell. Is it the princess ?

Dion. Ay.

C. Fell. Then I have seen something yet, 50

Pha. But who has hurt her ?

C. Fell. I told you, a rogue ; I ne'er saw him before, I.

Pha. Madam, who did it ?

Are. Some dishonest wretch ;

Alas, I know him not, and do forgive him !

C. Fell. He's hurt too ; he cannot go far ; I made my father's old fox fly about his ears.

Pha. How will you have me kill him ?

Are. Not at all ;

'Tis some distracted fellow.

60

Pha. By this hand,

I'll leave ne'er a piece of him bigger than a nut,
And bring him all to you in my hat.

Are. Nay, good sir,

If you do take him, bring him quick to me,
And I will study for a punishment
Great as his fault.

Pha. I will.

Are. But swear.

Pha. By all my love, I will.—

70

Woodmen, conduct the princess to the king,
And bear that wounded fellow to dressing.—
Come, gentlemen, we'll follow the chase close.

[*Exeunt on one side PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE ; exit on the other ARETHUSA attended by the First Woodman.*]

C. Fell. I pray you, friend, let me see the king.

2nd Wood. That you shall, and receive thanks.

C. Fell. If I get clear with this, I'll go see no more gay sights.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE IV.—*Another part of the Forest.*

Enter BELLARIO.

Bel. A heaviness near death sits on my brow,
And I must sleep. Bear me, thou gentle bank,
For ever, if thou wilt. You sweet ones all, [*Lies down.*]
Let me unworthy press you : I could wish
I rather were a corse strewed o'er with you
Than quick above you. Dullness shuts mine eyes,
And I am giddy ; oh, that I could take
So sound a sleep that I might never wake ! [*Sleeps.*]

Enter PHILASTER.

Phi. I have done ill ; my conscience calls me false,
To strike at her that would not strike at me. 10
When I did fight, methought I heard her pray
The gods to guard me. She may be abused,
And I a loathed villain : if she be,
She will conceal who hurt her. He has wounds
And cannot follow ; neither knows he me.
Who's this ? Bellario sleeping ! If thou be'st
Guilty, there is no justice that thy sleep
Should be so sound, and mine, whom thou hast wronged,
[*Cry within.*

So broken. Hark ! I am pursued. You gods,
I'll take this offered means of my escape : 20
They have no mark to know me but my blood,
If she be true ; if false, let mischief light
On all the world at once ! Sword, print my wounds
Upon this sleeping boy ! I have none, I think,
Are mortal, nor would I lay greater on thee.

[*Wounds* BELLARIO.

Bel. Oh, death, I hope, is come ! Blest be that hand !
It meant me well. Again, for pity's sake !

Phi. I have caught myself ; [*Falls.*
The loss of blood hath stayed my flight. Here, here,
Is he that struck thee : take thy full revenge ; 30
Use me, as I did mean thee, worse than death ;
I'll teach thee to revenge. This luckless hand
Wounded the princess ; tell my followers
Thou didst receive these hurts in staying me,
And I will second thee ; get a reward.

Bel. Fly, fly, my lord, and save yourself !

Phi. How's this ?
Wouldst thou I should be safe ?

Bel. Else were it vain

For me to live. These little wounds I have 40
Have not bled much : reach me that noble hand ;
I'll help to cover you.

Phi. Art thou then true to me ?

Bel. Or let me perish loathed ! Come, my good lord,
Creep in amongst those bushes : who does know
But that the gods may save your much-loved breath ?

Phi. Then I shall die for grief, if not for this,
That I have wounded thee. What wilt thou do ?

Bel. Shift for myself well. Peace ! I hear 'em come.

[*PHILASTER creeps into a bush.*

[*Voices within.*] Follow, follow, follow ! that way they went.

Bel. With my own wounds I'll bloody my own sword.
I need not counterfeit to fall ; Heaven knows 52
That I can stand no longer. [*Falls.*

Enter PHARAMOND, DION, CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE.

Pha. To this place we have tracked him by his blood.

Cle. Yonder, my lord, creeps one away.

Dion. Stay, sir ! what are you ?

Bel. A wretched creature, wounded in these woods
By beasts : relieve me, if your names be men,
Or I shall perish.

Dion. This is he, my lord, 60
Upon my soul, that hurt her : 'tis the boy,
That wicked boy, that served her.

Pha. Oh, thou damned
In thy creation ! what cause couldst thou shape
To hurt the princess ?

Bel. Then I am betrayed.

Dion. Betrayed ! no, apprehended.

Bel. I confess
(Urge it no more) that, big with evil thoughts,
I set upon her, and did take my aim, 70
Her death. For charity let fall at once

The punishment you mean, and do not load
This weary flesh with tortures.

Pha. I will know

Who hired thee to this deed.

Bel. Mine own revenge.

Pha. Revenge! for what?

Bel. It pleased her to receive

Me as her page, and, when my fortunes ebb'd,
That men strid o'er them careless, she did shower 80
Her welcome graces on me, and did swell
My fortunes till they overflowed their banks,
Threatening the men that crossed 'em; when, as swift
As storms arise at sea, she turned her eyes
To burning suns upon me, and did dry
The streams she had bestowed, leaving me worse
And more contemned than other little brooks,
Because I had been great. In short, I knew
I could not live, and therefore did desire
To die revenged. 90

Pha. If tortures can be found
Long as thy natural life, resolve to feel
The utmost rigour.

Cle. Help to lead him hence.

[*PHILASTER creeps out of the bush.*]

Phi. Turn back, you ravishers of innocence!
Know ye the price of that you bear away
So rudely?

Pha. Who's that?

Dion. 'Tis the Lord Philaster.

Phi. 'Tis not the treasure of all kings in one, 100
The wealth of Tagus, nor the rocks of pearl
That pave the court of Neptune, can weigh down
That virtue. It was I that hurt the princess.
Place me, some god, upon a pyramis
Higher than hills of earth, and lend a voice

Loud as your thunder to me, that from thence
I may discourse to all the under-world
The worth that dwells in him !

Pha. How 's this ?

Bel. My lord, some man

110

Weary of life, that would be glad to die.

Phi. Leave these untimely courtesies, Bellario.

Bel. Alas, he 's mad ! Come, will you lead me on ?

Phi. By all the oaths that men ought most to keep,
And gods do punish most when men do break,
He touched her not.—Take heed, Bellario,
How thou dost drown the virtues thou hast shown
With perjury.—By all that 's good, 'twas I !
You know she stood betwixt me and my right.

Pha. Thy own tongue be thy judge !

120

Cle. It was Philaster.

Dion. Is't not a brave boy ?

Well, sirs, I fear me we were all deceived.

Phi. Have I no friend here ?

Dion. Yes.

Phi. Then show it : some

Good body lend a hand to draw us nearer.

Would you have tears shed for you when you die ?

Then lay me gently on his neck, that there

I may weep floods and breathe forth my spirit.

130

'Tis not the wealth of Plutus, nor the gold

[*Embraces* BELLARIO.

Locked in the heart of earth, can buy away

This arm-full from me : this had been a ransom

To have redeemed the great Augustus Caesar,

Had he been taken. You hard-hearted men,

More stony than these mountains, can you see

Such clear pure blood drop, and not cut your flesh

To stop his life ? to bind whose bitter wounds,

Queens ought to tear their hair, and with their tears

Bathe 'em.—Forgive me, thou that art the wealth
Of poor Philaster!

141

Enter KING, ARETHUSA, and Guard.

King. Is the villain ta'en?

Pha. Sir, here be two confess the deed; but sure
It was Philaster.

Phi. Question it no more;
It was.

King. The fellow that did fight with him
Will tell us that.

Are. Aye me! I know he will.

King. Did not you know him?

150

Are. Sir, if it was he,
He was disguised.

Phi. I was so. Oh, my stars,
That I should live still.

[*Aside.*

King. Thou ambitious fool,
Thou that hast laid a train for thy own life!—
Now I do mean to do, I'll leave to talk.
Bear them to prison.

Are. Sir, they did plot together to take hence
This harmless life; should it pass unrevenged,
I should to earth go weeping: grant me, then,
By all the love a father bears his child,
Their custodies, and that I may appoint
Their tortures and their deaths.

160

Dion. Death! Soft; our law will not reach that for
this fault.

King. 'Tis granted; take 'em to you with a guard.—
Come, princely Pharamond, this business past,
We may with more security go on
To your intended match.

170

[*Exeunt all except DION, CLEREMONT, and THRASILINE.*

Cle. I pray that this action lose not Philaster the hearts
of the people.

Dion. Fear it not; their over-wise heads will think it but a trick. [*Exeunt.*]

The princess, having, by her feigned anger, obtained the custody of Philaster, marries him. The King threatens them both with death, but at that moment news comes that Pharamond has been taken by the people and is being kept as a hostage while their prince is in danger. There is a general tumult, which Philaster alone can quiet. He saves the King, and so awakens his gratitude. But though the King accepts Philaster as his son, he declares that Bellario must die.

ACT V. SCENE V.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

Bel. Will you torture me?

King. Haste there;

Why stay you?

Bel. Then I shall not break my vow,
You know, just gods, though I discover all.

King. How's that? will he confess?

Dion. Sir, so he says.

King. Speak then.

Bel. Great king, if you command
This lord to talk with me alone, my tongue, 10
Urged by my heart, shall utter all the thoughts
My youth hath known; and stranger things than these
You hear not often.

King. Walk aside with him.

[*DION and BELLARIO walk apart.*]

Dion. Why speak'st thou not?

Bel. Know you this face, my lord?

Dion. No.

Bel. Have you not seen it, nor the like?

Dion. Yes, I have seen the like, but readily
I know not where. 20

Bel. I have been often told
In court of one Euphrasia, a lady,
And daughter to you; betwixt whom and me

They that would flatter my bad face would swear
There was such strange resemblance, that we two
Could not be known asunder, drest alike.

Dion. By Heaven, and so there is!

Bel. For her fair sake,
Who now doth spend the spring-time of her life
In holy pilgrimage, move to the king, 30
That I may scape this torture.

Dion. But thou speak'st
As like Euphrasia as thou dost look.
How came it to thy knowledge that she lives
In pilgrimage?

Bel. I know it not, my lord;
But I have heard it, and do scarce believe it.

Dion. Oh, my shame! is it possible? Draw near,
That I may gaze upon thee. Art thou she,
Or else her murderer? where wert thou born? 40

Bel. In Syracusa.

Dion. What's thy name?

Bel. Euphrasia.

Dion. Oh, 'tis just, 'tis she!
Now I do know thee. Oh, that thou hadst died,
And I had never seen thee nor my shame!
How shall I own thee? shall this tongue of mine
E'er call thee daughter more?

Bel. Would I had died indeed! I wish it too:
And so I must have done by vow, ere published 50
What I have told, but that there was no means
To hide it longer. Yet I joy in this,
The princess is all clear.

King. What have you done?

Dion. All is discovered.

Phi. Why then hold you me? [*Offers to stab himself.*]
All is discovered! Pray you, let me go.

King. Stay him.

Are. What is discovered ?

Dion. Why, my shame.

60

It is a woman : let her speak the rest.

Phi. How ? that again !

Dion. It is a woman.

Phi. Blessed be you powers that favour innocence !

King. Lay hold upon that lady. [*MEGRA is seized.*]

Phi. It is a woman, sir !—Hark, gentlemen,
It is a woman !—Arethusa, take
My soul into thy breast, that would be gone
With joy. It is a woman ! Thou art fair,
And virtuous still to ages, in despite
Of malice.

70

King. Speak you, where lies his shame ?

Bel. I am his daughter.

Phi. The gods are just.

Dion. I dare accuse none ; but, before you two,
The virtue of our age, I bend my knee
For mercy.

[*Kneels.*]

Phi. [*raising him*]. Take it freely ; for I know,
Though what thou didst were indiscreetly done,
'Twas meant well.

80

Are. And for me,
I have a power to pardon sins, as oft
As any man has power to wrong me.

Cle. Noble and worthy !

Phi. But, Bellario
(For I must call thee still so), tell me why
Thou didst conceal thy sex. It was a fault,
A fault, Bellario, though thy other deeds
Of truth outweighed it : all these jealousies
Had flown to nothing, if thou hadst discovered
What now we know.

90

Bel. My father oft would speak
Your worth and virtue ; and, as I did grow

More and more apprehensive, I did thirst
 To see the man so praised. But yet all this
 Was but a maiden-longing, to be lost
 As soon as found ; till, sitting in my window,
 Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god,
 I thought, (but it was you), enter our gates.
 My blood flew out and back again, as fast 100
 As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
 Like breath : then was I called away in haste
 To entertain you. Never was a man,
 Heaved from a sheep-cote to a sceptre, raised
 So high in thoughts as I : you left a kiss
 Upon these lips then, which I mean to keep
 From you for ever : I did hear you talk,
 Far above singing. After you were gone,
 I grew acquainted with my heart, and searched
 What stirred it so : alas, I found it love ! 110
 Yet far from lust ; for, could I but have lived
 In presence of you, I had had my end.
 For this I did delude my noble father
 With a feigned pilgrimage, and dressed myself
 In habit of a boy ; and, for I knew
 My birth no match for you, I was past hope
 Of having you ; and, understanding well
 That when I made discovery of my sex
 I could not stay with you, I made a vow,
 By all the most religious things a maid 120
 Could call together, never to be known,
 Whilst there was hope to hide me from men's eyes,
 For other than I seemed, that I might ever
 Abide with you. Then sat I by the fount,
 Where first you took me up.

King. Search out a match
 Within our kingdom, where and when thou wilt,
 And I will pay thy dowry ; and thyself

Wilt well deserve him.

Bel. Never, sir, will I

130

Marry ; it is a thing within my vow :

But, if I may have leave to serve the princess,
To see the virtues of her lord and her,
I shall have hope to live.

Are. I, Philaster,

Cannot be jealous, though you had a lady
Drest like a page to serve you ; nor will I
Suspect her living here.—Come, live with me ;
Live free as I do. She that loves my lord,
Cursed be the wife that hates her !

140

Phi. I grieve such virtue should be laid in earth
Without an heir.—Hear me, my royal father :
Wrong not the freedom of our souls so much
To think to take revenge of that base woman ;
Her malice cannot hurt us. Set her free
As she was born, saving from shame and sin.

King. Set her at liberty. But leave the court ;
This is no place for such.—You, Pharamond,
Shall have free passage, and a conduct home
Worthy so great a prince. When you come there, 150
Remember 'twas your faults that lost you her,
And not my purposed will.

Pha. I do confess,
Renowned sir.

King. Last, join your hands in one. Enjoy, Philaster,
This kingdom, which is yours, and, after me,
Whatever I call mine. My blessing on you !
All happy hours be at your marriage-joys,
That you may grow yourselves over all lands,
And live to see your plenteous branches spring 160
Wherever there is sun ! Let princes learn
By this to rule the passions of their blood ;
For what Heaven wills can never be withstood. [*Exeunt.*]

III

HISTORIES

CHAPTER I

FOLK-LEGEND

It is possible that the Mumming-play, the May game, and the Morris dance may all be traced back to some primitive country festival, sacrificial or symbolic, which represented the death of the year in Winter and its revival in the Spring.¹ By the time that they emerge from primitive custom to historic record they have become differentiated, and have been usually centralized on two of the most popular English legends, that of St. George and that of Robin Hood. In the May game Robin Hood and his company are familiar figures; the account given by Strutt² enumerates the whole band, and describes in detail their pageant and their costumes: the Mumming-play, transferred to the general festivities of Christmas, is almost invariably concerned with the prowess of St. George and his combats with the dragon or the Turkish knight.³ The separation is, however, not entirely complete. A St. George play from Bampton in Oxfordshire includes Robin Hood and Little John as subsidiary characters: in the example here given, from the Cotswold village of South Cerney, they are the protagonists and St. George does not appear.

The typical structure of the Mumming-play can

¹ For the evidence on this point see Mr. Chambers' *Mediaeval Stage*, vol. i. p. 117 et seq.

² Quoted in Hone's *Every Day Book*, vol. i. pp. 552-5.

³ Mr. Chambers enumerates twenty-nine St. George plays from different parts of England (op. cit. vol. i. pp. 205-6). The three Robin Hood plays given by Manly are probably not Folk-dramas, but compositions of *Trouvères* for one or other of the Spring festivals.

be divided into three parts. First comes a prologue spoken sometimes by one of the *dramatis personae*, sometimes by a special character appointed for the purpose, and either demanding room for the players or, in milder tone, apologizing for their intrusion. Next follows the drama proper; a fight in which one of the combatants is killed or seriously wounded, and after which he is magically restored by the doctor. Thirdly, the minor characters enter, one by one, each introducing himself with a few appropriate lines of description, and the entertainment closes with a dance and a collection of money from the spectators. The number of these minor parts is not uniform, but varies from place to place, and it not infrequently happens that for reasons of economy several of them are spoken by the same actor.

The text of the South Cerney play has been much corrupted in oral transmission. By collating it with other versions we have been able to correct some of the more obvious verbal mistakes¹: but in Part III there is evidence of modern interpolations which, for our present purpose, it has seemed better to omit. A few lines from the earlier portions are repeated without their context, a few speeches have been mangled out of all meaning; and as these passages appear to be later accretions we have ventured to pare them away, in the hope of presenting the drama as nearly as possible in its original form. The part of the doctor has probably been modified by *impromptus* which have successively grown into the text, but as this part is integral to the plot we have left it untouched.

¹ Thus the Tanner's first line, after his recovery, is now always delivered :—

Terrible, terrible : life was ever known.

The emendation suggested in l. 95 is corroborated by the occurrence of the same words in the Whitehaven and other versions.

The play is usually acted on Christmas Eve in the hall or kitchen of the house visited. Robin Hood, Little John, and the Tanner wear masks (like those used at a masquerade), and are dressed in cardboard caps and tunics of sacking, both hung with streamers of red and yellow rag, and in parti-coloured chintz trousers. When the fight begins the two champions crouch to the floor, holding their quarter-staves in the middle and clashing the ends alternately, until the Tanner slips his guard and is wounded 'in the knee'. After some haggling the doctor enters, his face whitened with flour, and his costume mainly remarkable for a tall hat, an enormous shirt-collar, and a long-tailed black coat. He kneels beside the Tanner and effects the cure with various comic gestures and incantations, some apparently traditional, some left to his invention at the moment. Of the other characters Beelzebub, who speaks most of the parts, has a blackened face and dark clothes, and carries in one hand a fool's bauble, in the other a dripping-pan for the collection: the Fool wears a pasteboard head or mask, and brings with him some kind of musical instrument.

In point of artistry the play ranks little higher than that pageant of the nine Worthies which, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, is so unmercifully interrupted by Biron and Dumain, but at the same time it possesses a good deal of historical value. The sacrificial origin has been entirely forgotten and is replaced by a sort of dramatized ballad on one of the favourite heroes of our ballad-literature. Beelzebub and the Fool are clearly borrowed from the Devil and the Vice of the Morality plays, and though some of their functions are confused they are still regarded as distinct personages. The dialogue, as we have seen, has in some degree suffered from recent additions, but the characters

represented are faithful to their few primitive types.¹ The whole thing is redolent of the soil: it is plain, downright and unsophisticated; and the choice of its main subject indicates to some degree that interest in English life and adventure which was afterwards more fully expressed by the Historical drama.

ROBIN HOOD AND THE TANNER

A MUMMING PLAY.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

THE TANNER OF NOTTING- HAM.	FARMER JACK.
ROBIN HOOD.	TINKER TOM.
LITTLE JOHN.	FATHER CHRISTMAS.
THE DOCTOR.	BEELZEBUB.
	FOOL.

Tanner. Give room, give room, this gallant hall,

And give me room to ride:

And I will show you an activity

On this merry Christmas-tide.

Activity of life,

Activity of age,

Such an activity never seen

Or acted on a stage.

I am bold Tanner from Nottingham,

My name is Arthur à Brand ;

10

There is not a squire in all Hampshire

That dares to let me stand.

With my long spike-staff on my shoulder

¹ Many of the Mummings plays have come to include 'moderns who have caught the popular imagination': e.g. Bonaparte (Leigh) and the king of Prussia (Bampton), Nelson (Devon), and Wellington (Cornwall). In one of the Wiltshire versions there is even a part for the Prince Imperial. See Mr. Chambers, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 212.

See how well I clear my way :
 With one, two, three, I make them all flee,
 And give them more labour to stay.
 As I was walking through the forest,
 Bold Robin Hood did I spy.¹

As soon as he did me spy, 20

He thought some sport for to make ;
 He stole out his hand, and bade me stand,
 And thus to me he spake.

Robin Hood. Who art thou, bold fellow,
 That standest so boldly here ?

Sure, and in brief, thou look'st like a thief,
 Come to steal away the king's deer.

Tanner. I am the keeper of the forest,
 The king put me in trust,
 To view the red deer, that run here and there, 30
 And stop thee, bold fellow, I must.

Robin Hood. If thou be the keeper of this forest,
 And have such great command,
 Thou must have more in store than thou had'st before,
 Ere thou biddest me to stand.

Tanner. I have no more to be taken in store,
 No more than I have need ;
 I have a staff and another old graff²,
 And I'm sure it will do its deed.

Robin Hood. For thy sword nor thy bow do I care not
 a strow, 40

For all thy brave boasts to boot,
 If thou once gets a snap all on the brain-top,
 Thou might'st as well fly as shoot.

Little John. What is the matter, master, pray ?
 I pray unto me tell :

¹ Two lines missing.

² stick, lit. 'branch'.

I see thee stand with a staff in thy hand,
And I fear it is not all well.

Robin Hood. It's a man and a man, and he bids me to
stand,

And a Tanner he stands by my side :
He's a bonny blade and a master by trade, 50
And he swears he'll tan the hide.

Little John. If it's to be commanded by that
It's as much as he can do ;
If he's so stout he and I'll have a bout,
And I'll tan his hide well too.

Tanner. Pray, and let us measure our staves
Before we begin our fray ;
I would not have my staff be longer than thine,
For that would be foul play.

Little John. My staff is out full length, 60
My staff is out full glee ;¹
My [trusty] staff will knock down a calf,
And I'm sure it will knock down thee.

Tanner. Let us this bout begin, and I'll see
If I can't make a better man of thee.

[*Fight begins : the Tanner for a moment gains the
advantage.*]

Little John. What, dost thou think, thou proud fellow,
That thou hast conquered me,
I'll let thee see before I go
I'll fight before I'd flee.

[*Fight resumed : Little John wounds the Tanner.*]

Little John. Doctor, doctor, where dost thou be ? 70
The bold Tanner's wounded in the knee.
Five thousand pounds I'll lay me down,
If a noble Doctor can be found.

¹ This phrase is corrupt beyond emendation. The actor illustrates it by thrusting his staff farther forward.

Doctor [without]. Not no more than that?

Little John. Ten thousand pounds I'll lay me down

If a noble Doctor can be found.

Doctor [without]. Hold my horse, Jack: rack him up
with a furze faggot, and give him a bucket of ashes to
drink. [Enters.

Good morrow, Ladies and Gentlemen all, 80

And a merry Christmas to you all.

I am a noble Doctor stout and good.

I can cure the purging of the blood,

The itch, the stitch, the palsy or the gout,

All pains within and all pains without.

Bring me an old woman nine years dead, ninety-nine
years buried, a hundred years laid in her grave;
if she'll rise up and crack one of my golden pills
I'll be bound in a bond of fifty pound her life
shall be saved. So don't believe me any longer,
ladies and gentlemen: I can cure this man if he's
not quite dead.

[Gives a pill to the Tanner who is lying motionless.

I have travelled through England, Scotland, and
France,

Rise up, bold Tanner, and let's have a dance.

Tanner [reviving]. Terrible, terrible, the like was never
seen:

Enough to frighten a man out of eleven senses into
seventeen.

Farmer Jack. Here come I old Farmer Jack,

Wife and family at my back;

Out of eleven I got but seven, 100

They, poor things, are gone to Heaven:

Out of seven I got but five,

They, poor things, were saved alive:

Out of five I got but three,
 Where they be gone I shan't tell thee.
 Out of three I got but one
 And he is gone to Burford¹ stone.
 Out of one I got but nane
 And he is gone to Narlase² Farm.

Tinker Tom. Here come I, old Tom the Tinkerd, 110

I was never a small-beer drinkard.
 I told the Chandler to his face,
 The chimney corner was his place.

Father Christmas. Here come I old Father Christmas.

Christmas comes but once a year,
 When it comes it brings good cheer,
 Beef, plum-pudding, mince-pies, and beer.

Beelzebub. Here come I, Beelzebub,

On my shoulders I carry a club,
 In my hands a dripping-pan, 120
 Am not I a funny old man?

Fool. Here come I, who haven't been yet,

With my great head and little wit,
 My head is great, my wit is small,
 So I play a tune will please ye all.

[Here follows a dance of the characters. The Fool plays, and Beelzebub, who takes part in the dance, strikes at the others with his bauble.]

GOD SAVE THE KING.

¹ In Oxfordshire, near the edge of the Cotswolds.

² Perhaps 'North-leas'. The affix 'leas' (pronounced 'lase') is not uncommon in the names of Cotswold farms: e.g. 'Dry-leas' near South Cerney.

CHAPTER II

A PROTESTANT MORALITY

FROM the eleventh century to the sixteenth the drama was commonly occupied in teaching moral and religious truths. 'A verse,' says George Herbert, 'may find him who a sermon flies'; and in much the same spirit our mediaeval preachers appear to have regarded the stage as an accessory to the pulpit, and to have reached by its means an audience not always amenable to severer discipline. At the approach of the Reformation the Protestant cause was not slow to borrow from its opponents one of the most powerful of their weapons. About 1530 there arose in Holland a school of neo-Latin drama, which spread successively to Switzerland, to France, and to Germany, which, as it spread, grew more distinctively Protestant in tone, and which attained its highest pitch of controversial vehemence in Kirchmayer's *Pammachius* (1538), a violent attack on Papal authority, translated into English by the redoubtable John Bale. In our own country the political events of these eight years were particularly favourable to such a movement. The breach between England and Rome was widening into open hostility. In 1533 Cranmer annulled the King's marriage with Catharine of Arragon: in 1534 Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy: in 1535 came the execution of More and Fisher: in 1538 the Pope launched against Henry a Bull of Excommunication and vainly urged the Emperor and the French king to invade his dominions. There had been no such defiance of Roman power since John quarrelled with Innocent III over Langton's appointment at Canterbury; and the victory of Henry VIII showed all the more salient by contrast with John's submission.

It was to emphasize this contrast that Bale, about 1538, composed the Historical Morality of *King John*. The whole plot turns upon the religious conflict: the whole tone is uncompromisingly Protestant; the king's abdication (for it comes to that) is treated, not as a defeat, but as a sacrifice; a significant chorus describes John as the Moses who revolted against Egypt and Henry as the Joshua who led his people into the promised land. Nor is Bale in any way superior to the current controversial methods of his time. He is as far below Heywood as Heywood is below Chaucer: his satire is a bitter and savage invective, often brutal in phrase, often unjust in purport; an ill-conditioned bully who, half a century later, would have taken service with Martin Mar-Prelate. Rome is to him simply an enemy to be opposed at all hazards: the Vice of his play is Sedition 'habited as a Monk'; Clergy is represented as a pitiful scoundrel; Dissimulation enters singing a Latin Litany for the king's downfall, and dies in the odour of sanctity for having poisoned him at Swinstead Abbey. The characters, in short, are not real personages, they are not even allegorical abstractions: they are no more or less than the topics of a fighting pamphlet.

Yet one of the most curious features of this odd play is the manner in which the historic and allegorical aspects melt into one another. It is not only that several parts are assigned to the same actor, so that England is bidden to 'dress for Clergy' and Sedition for 'Civil Order'; the parts themselves change before our eyes with as bewildering a rapidity as in the forepiece and afterpiece of a harlequinade. At a touch of the dramatist's wand Usurped Power becomes Pope Innocent III, Private Wealth becomes Cardinal Pandulphus, Dissimulation, after more than one disguise, announces himself as Simon of Swinstead. Imperial Majesty, again, though

never actually named, is undoubtedly intended for Henry VIII in person. In the narrative of events the historic aspect clearly predominates, and though Bale makes full use of poetic licence it cannot be doubted that he followed in the main the chronicles on which his work is a fantastic commentary.

It is probable that this play can be identified with the 'Interlude' which was given at Cranmer's house in 1539 and described by a Protestant spectator as 'one of the best matters that ever he saw touching King John'. Some parts, however, must have been added subsequently, for the Interpreter, in one passage, speaks of 'the late King Henry', and our present version may therefore date from the reign of Edward VI. Among Bale's other 'historical' dramas, none of which are now extant, three were called *The Treacheries of the Papists*, *The Impostures of Thomas à Becket*, and *Upon both Marriages of the King*.

JOHN BALE (1495-1563) was born at Cove in Suffolk, and educated at the Carmelite Convent, Norwich, and at Jesus College, Cambridge. He was converted to Protestantism by Lord Wentworth, became Vicar of Thorndon, and in 1534 was convened before the Archbishop of York to answer for a sermon denouncing Romish practices. His earliest play, *A brief Comedy or Interlude of John the Baptist*, was written in 1538, and was not less polemic than the sermon. In 1540, on the fall of Cromwell, he fled to Germany: seven years later he was recalled to England by the accession of Edward VI, and was successively appointed to the benefices of Bishopstoke (1547) and Swaffham (1551). In 1558 he was promoted to the See of Ossory, where he vigorously upheld Protestant doctrines. At the accession of Mary he fled, but was apprehended on a charge of High Treason, and though acquitted of the greater penalty was fined £300. During Mary's reign he lived abroad, chiefly at Basle; after her death he returned once more to England and ended his days as a Prebend of Canterbury. He was a man of great learning, a bitter and acrimonious controversialist, and a voluminous writer of whose works ninety are mentioned

in Cooper's *Athenae Cantabrigienses*. He composed over forty plays or Interludes, some of which, when he was Bishop of Ossory, he had acted at the Kilkenny market-cross on Sunday afternoons. The date of *King John* cannot be certainly ascertained, but it was probably about 1538.

KING JOHN

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

KING JOHN.	PRIVATE WEALTH.
ENGLAND.	DISSIMULATION.
CLERGY.	RAYMUNDUS.
SEDITION.	SIMON OF SWINSTEAD.
CIVIL ORDER.	USURPED POWER.
STEPHEN LANGTON.	THE POPE.
NOBILITY.	INTERPRETER.
CARDINAL PANDULPHUS.	TREASON.
IMPERIAL MAJESTY.	VERITY.

ACT I.

Enter KING JOHN alone.

K. John. To show what I am I think it content :
 John, King of England the chronicle doth me call.
 My grandfather was an emperor excellent,
 My father a king by succession lineal,
 A king my brother like as to him did fall,
 Richard Coeur-de-lion they called him in France,
 Which had over enemies most fortunable chance.

By the will of God and His high ordinance,
 In Ireland, in Wales, and Anjou, and Normandy,
 In England also I have had the governance, 10
 I have worn the crown and wrought victoriously,
 And now do purpose by practice and study
 To reform the laws and set men in good order
 That true justice may be had in every border.

Enter ENGLAND in widow's weeds.

Eng. Then I trust your Grace will weigh a poor widow's cause
 Ungodly used, as ye shall know in short clause.

King John asks what is the matter, and she makes a formal complaint against the clergy.

Eng. For they take from me my cattle, house and land,
 My woods and pastures, with other commodities. 20

K. John. I may not in no-wise leave thy right undiscussed,
 For God hath set me by His appointment just
 To further thy cause, to maintain thy right,
 And therefore I will support thee both day and night.
 So long as my simple life here shall endure
 I will see thee have no wrong, be fast and sure.
 I will first of all call my nobility,
 Dukes, earls, and lords, each one in their degree,
 Next them the clergy, or fathers spiritual,
 Archbishops, bishops, abbots and priors all, 30
 Then the great judges and lawyers every one,
 So opening to them thy cause and pitiful moan,
 By the means whereof I shall their minds understand.
 If they help thee not, myself will take it in hand.

Go out ENGLAND, and dress for CLERGY.

Sedition boasts to the King of the power that he has among the clergy. He then goes out 'to dress for Civil Order', and Nobility enters. John accuses Nobility of being acquainted with Sedition. Nobility indignantly denies the charge. Clergy enters; Nobility and Clergy side together against the King. Finally Clergy goes to get help from Rome.

Dissimulation is heard by Sedition singing a litany. Sedition greets him as cousin, since they are the children of Falsehood

and Privy Treason, the two sons of Infidelity. Together they plot against King John.

The first Act ends with the Pope excommunicating the King, and sending Raymundus to stir up war against him throughout Europe. An Interpreter acts as chorus, and comments on the virtues of King John and the iniquity of his enemies.

ACT II.

The King is persuaded to give his crown to Pandulph, in order to preserve his people from the miseries of war. He bewails to England the unhappy condition of the country.

DISSIMULATION sings without.

Diss. Wassail, wassail out of the milk-pail,
Wassail, wassail, as white as my nail,
Wassail, wassail, in snow, frost and hail,
Wassail, wassail, with partridge and rail¹,
Wassail, wassail, that much doth avail,
Wassail, wassail, that never will fail.

K. John. Who is that, England? I pray thee step forth and see.

Eng. He doth seem afar some religious man to be.

[*Enter DISSIMULATION, who wishes the King prosperity.*]

K. John. A loving person thou seemest for to be.

Diss. I am as gentle a worm as ever ye see. 10

K. John. But what is thy name, good friend? I pray thee tell me.

Diss. Simon of Swinstead my very name is, perdee,
I am taken of men for Monastical Devotion;
And here have I brought you a marvellous good potion,
For I heard ye say that ye were very dry.

K. John. Indeed I would gladly drink, I pray thee come nigh.

Diss. The days of your life, never felt ye such a cup,
So good and wholesome if ye would drink it up;

¹ A family of birds, the Landrail (or Cornerake) is a species.

It passeth malmsey ;

By my faith, I think a better drink never was. 20

K. John. Begin, gentle monk ; I pray thee drink half to me.

Diss. If ye drank all up it were the better for ye ;
It would slake your thirst and also quicken your brain.

A better drink is not in Portugal nor Spain.

Therefore sup it off, and make an end of it quickly.

K. John. Nay, thou shalt drink half ; there is no remedy.

Diss. Good luck to ye, then ! have at it by-and-by.

[*Aside.*] Half will I consume, if there be no remedy.

K. John. God saint thee, good monk, with all my very heart.

Diss. I have brought ye half ; convey me that for your part. 30

DISSIMULATION goeth to another part of the stage, and says.

Where art thou, Sedition ? by the mass I die, I die.

Help now at a pinch. Alas, man, come away shortly.

Dissimulation dies, comforted by the thought that he is a martyr like Thomas of Canterbury.

King John begins to feel great pain.

K. John. Where became the monk that was here with me lately ?

Eng. He is poisoned, sir, and lieth a-dying surely.

K. John. It cannot be so, for he was here even now.

Eng. Doubtless, sir, it is so true as I have told you ;

A false Judas kiss he hath given and is gone.

The halt, sore, and lame this pitiful case will moan.

Never prince was there that made to poor people's uses

So many maison-dieus, hospitals, and spittal-houses, 40

As your Grace hath done yet since the world began.

King John dies, forgiving all his enemies. Imperial Majesty enters and sets the kingdom in order.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA. PART I.

If the line between Comedy and Tragedy is sometimes hard to draw, still harder is that between either of them and the Historical drama. In no domain of Art are the provinces sharply delimited, except in so far as they are determined by the medium employed, nor is there any scientific frontier which separates overture from symphony, epic from romance, portraiture from illustration. We feel that it is mere pedantry to apply an exact system of nomenclature to Haydn's music or to the poetry of Ariosto: still less can we expect to find methods of precise classification in so vast and varied a realm as that of the Elizabethan stage. At the same time we may gather from the practice of Shakespeare some general principles as to the treatment of plays which derive their subject from English History: and it is not without interest to observe the manner in which these can be traced in the work of his predecessors and contemporaries.

The so-called classical tragedy conforms in the main to the three dramatic unities:—to the unity of time which restricts the action to a single day, the unity of place which confines the scene to one spot, or at most to the limit of a day's journey, and the unity of action which concentrates the entire issue on the development of one principal theme. It is beside our purpose to discuss here the basis of these artistic conventions:¹ enough that they

¹ The unity of action is, for some forms of drama, a true principle, though it has often been conventionally treated. The unities of

hardened later into a tyranny as narrow as that of eighteenth-century opera, and that Shakespeare, in regard of them, acknowledged no other authority than that of his own genius. But on this point two distinctions may be observed. First that in his tragedies he maintains the unity of action more nearly than in the historical plays. From the former we receive one definite and chief impression¹ to which all else is subservient:—the ambition of *Macbeth*, the jealousy of *Othello*, the ill-fated passion of *Romeo and Juliet*; in one play *Lear* is emphatically the central figure, in another *Hamlet*, in another *Coriolanus*. From the latter we come away with the feeling that a great historical pageant has been displayed before our eyes, each part with its own group of characters and its own centre of interest: in *Henry IV* there is no uniform issue, in *Henry VIII* there is no final climax; the dramatist is himself a spectator and interprets to us successively the actual course of events. Second, and as corollary from the first, though Shakespeare is always free from the tiresome conventions of place and time, yet in his *Histories* he allows himself a wider freedom than in any of his other plays. The very concentration of tragedy implies a comparatively infrequent change of scene, a comparatively narrow period of duration: the greater part of *Macbeth* takes place at Forres, the greater part of *Othello* at 'the sea-port in Cyprus': the main action of *Hamlet* is never away from Elsinore, that of *Romeo*,

place and time are in themselves mere conventions, and derive what validity they possess from their dependence on the unity of action.

¹ And that always personal. In *Macbeth* we care everything for the hero and nothing at all for his kingdom. In *Henry V*, which of all the Chronicle-Histories has the most unity of action, England itself is the hero. *Julius Caesar* stands across the frontier-line; the general disposition of the play is that of a history, but the character of Brutus is tragic.

except for one episode, is never away from Verona, and is confined within the limit of three days. But *King John* carries us from Northampton to Angier, from Angier to Rouen, and from Rouen to Edmundsbury and Swinstead; *Henry IV* occupies an entire reign and almost an entire kingdom; the scene of *Richard II* is given on the title-page as 'dispersedly in England and Wales'. These distinctions are not, of course, to be regarded as hard and fast lines, or to be pressed with mathematical accuracy: they merely imply that as a general rule the historical drama is treated on a wider area than tragedy and with a greater variety of topics.

This liberty is already vindicated in Peele's *Edward I*. The plot covers a range of twenty-seven years; it follows the chronicle of events wherever they lead; it ends in somewhat arbitrary fashion at the death of Queen Elinor. We may describe it as a tentative sketch in the manner which Shakespeare afterwards brought to perfection: it has the same freedom of handling, the same intermixture of tragic and comic scenes, the same distribution of subjects: on all grounds it may claim to be regarded as the first chronicle-history in English drama.¹

On one chief point, however, it is remarkably unhistoric. The portrait of Elinor is not a travesty, or a caricature, or even a libel: it resembles the original in no single feature. She was one of the noblest women who ever lived; brave, devout, faithful, the friend of all who were in trouble, the help of all who were in need. Her death was mourned by the whole people of England, her character, as given by Walsingham, is that of a saint. Yet she is here depicted as a proud and cruel tyrant, ostentatious in wealth, jealous of rivalry, atoning for monstrous

¹ Greene's *James IV*, also produced about 1590, is in no sense a historical drama, but a mixture of farce, romantic tragedy, and fairyland.

crimes by a monstrous expiation, and ending on her miserable death-bed a life of almost unredeemed oppression and wickedness. Edward I has been called the English Justinian: it was a strange irony which made Peele give him for wife an English Theodora.

The causes to which this was due form one of the most remarkable chapters in our native mythology. When Elinor died, at Hardby near Grantham, Edward carried her body in solemn procession to its burial in Westminster Abbey, and ordered that twelve great crosses should be set up at the twelve halting-places by the way. The last of them was at the village of Charing between London and Westminster, and thus the name of Charing Cross came to be closely associated with that of the queen.¹ A few months later died the Queen-mother, Elinor of Provence, who had been bitterly unpopular with the people of London, and in particular had quarrelled with the Corporation over a question of disputed rights at Queenhithe. The populace had a longer memory for its hatreds than for its loves: there arose the legend of a wicked Queen Elinor with whom both Charing Cross and Queenhithe were vaguely connected; at the end of Mary's reign appeared a doggerel ballad² describing how Elinor the Spaniard cruelly murdered the Lady Mayoress, how she denied her guilt with an oath, how the ground at Charing Cross opened and swallowed her up, how she miraculously rose again at Queenhithe, and how she died in torment after a panic-stricken confession. Peele saw in this ballad a ready means of appealing to national prejudice, and incorporated it entire with-

¹ In recent times there has arisen the wild suggestion that it is derived from 'chère reine'. The name, which has a humbler origin, dates from before the reign of Edward I, and is shared by Charing in Kent and by Charingworth in Gloucestershire.

² See Dr. Thieme's pamphlet, *Peele's Edward I und seine Quellen*. Mr. Bullen, who quotes the ballad in his edition of Peele, dates it at the time of the Armada.

out any regard for the essential untruth which underlies its absurdities. It well illustrates the uncertainty of the dramatic standard that so tawdry an extravaganza could have been thrust into the climax of a serious play.

Apart from this blot there is a good deal of rough workmanship, but the character of Edward is finely drawn, and the versification shows Peele at his best. On this latter point he was unquestionably influenced by Marlowe, whose *Tamburlaine* appeared in 1587; but he has his own rhythms and cadences, his own gift of sonorous and eloquent expression. He used our language with a peculiar felicity, and, despite a few pedantries and mannerisms, with a purity of taste that was unusual in his day. He set a landmark in one of the paths of our literature, and at its turning-point opened the way for the Historical drama of Shakespeare.

GEORGE PEELE (c. 1558-c. 1597) was the son of James Peele, citizen of London and clerk of Christ's Hospital, where the boy received his first education. In 1571 he entered at Broadgates Hall, Oxford, but migrated in 1574 to Christ Church, where he took his degree in 1579. While still at the University he won high reputation as a poet, wrote his *Tale of Troy*, and translated one of the *Iphigenias* of Euripides. On his return to London he became an actor, lived a careless and extravagant life, and became famous as the hero of some rather discreditable escapades. His first play, the *Arraignment of Paris*, was produced in or about 1581: next followed *Edward I* (about 1590), the *Battle of Alcazar* (1592), the *Old Wives' Tale* (printed in 1595), the *Love of King David and fair Bethsabe* (printed posthumously in 1599), and a pastoral called the *Hunting of Cupid*, which was printed before 1607 but is now lost. He is also said to have written portions of *Henry VI, Parts I and II*, still included among the works of Shakespeare. Beside his dramas he composed several miscellaneous poems, some of which, e. g. *The Farewell* (1589), and *England's Holidays* (1595), show his fluency and skill in blank verse. The date of his death is unknown, but it was probably 1597.

EDWARD I

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EDWARD I, King of England, surnamed LONGSHANKS.	JACK, his novice. Harper.
EDMUND, Duke of Lancaster, his brother.	Farmer.
GILBERT DE CLARE, Earl of Gloucester.	JOHN.
MORTIMER, Earl of March. EARL OF SUSSEX.	Bishop, English Lords, Scottish Lords, Welsh Barons, Mes- sengers, Soldiers, &c.
SIR THOMAS SPENCER.	QUEEN-MOTHER.
CRESSINGHAM.	QUEEN ELINOR.
JOHN BALIOL, elected King of Scotland.	JOAN OF ACON, her daughter.
VERSES.	LADY ELINOR.
LLUELLEN, Prince of Wales.	MARY, DUCHESS OF LAN- CASTER.
SIR DAVID OF BRECKNOCK, his brother.	MAYORESS OF LONDON.
RICE AP MEREDITH.	GUENTHIAN.
OWEN AP RICE.	Potter's Wife.
GUENTHER.	KATHERINE.
FRIAR HUGH AP DAVID.	Ladies.

*Enter the QUEEN-MOTHER attended by GLOUCESTER, SUSSEX,
MORTIMER, SIR DAVID, and Ladies.*

Q. Mother. My Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucester, and Lord
Mortimer,

To do you honour in your sovereign's eyes,
That, as we hear, is newly come a-land
From Palestine, with all his men-of-war
(The poor remainder of the royal fleet,
Preserv'd by miracle in Sicil road),
Go mount your coursers, meet him on the way ;
Pray him to spur his steed ; minutes are hours,

Until his mother see her princely son
Shining in glory of his safe return. 10

[*Exeunt GLOUCESTER and MORTIMER.*

Illustrious England, ancient seat of kings,
Whose chivalry hath royaliz'd thy fame,
That sounding bravely through terrestrial vale,
Proclaiming conquests, spoils, and victories,
Rings glorious echoes through the farthest world ;
What warlike nation, train'd in feats of arms,
What barbarous people, stubborn, or untam'd,
What climate under the meridian signs,
Or frozen zone under his brumal stage,
Erst have not quak'd and trembled at the name 20
Of Britain and her mighty conquerors ?
Her neighbour realms, as Scotland, Denmark, France,
Aw'd with her deeds, and jealous of her arms,
Have begg'd defensive and offensive leagues.
Thus Europe, rich and mighty in her kings,
Hath fear'd brave England, dreadful in her kings.
And now, t' eternize Albion's champions
Equivalent with Trojans' ancient fame,
Comes lovely Edward from Jerusalem,
Veering before the wind, ploughing the sea ; 30
His stretch'd sails fill'd with the breath of men
That through the world admire his manliness.
And, lo, at last arriv'd in Dover-road,
Longshanks, your king, your glory, and our son,
With troops of conquering lords and warlike knights,
Like bloody-crested Mars, o'erlooks his host,
Higher than all his army by the head,
Marching along as bright as Phoebus' eyes !
And we, his mother, shall behold our son,
And England's peers shall see their sovereign. 40

The trumpets sound, and enter the train, viz. KING EDWARD

LONGSHANKS's maimed Soldiers with head-pieces and garlands on them, every man with his red-cross on his coat ; the Ancient borne in a chair, his garland and his plumes on his head-piece, his ensign in his hand. Enter, after them, GLOUCESTER and MORTIMER bareheaded, and others, as many as may be. Then enter KING EDWARD LONGSHANKS, QUEEN ELINOR, JOAN, LANCASTER, and SIGNIOR MONTFORT (the EARL OF LEICESTER's prisoner) with CHARLES DE MONTFORT his brother ; Sailors and Soldiers.

Gloucester ! Edward ! Oh, my sweet sons !

[Falls and swoons.

Longsh. Help, ladies !—Oh, ingrateful destiny,
To welcome Edward with this tragedy !

Gloucester. Patient, your highness : 'tis but mother's love
Ravish'd with sight of her thrice-valiant sons.—

Madam, amaze not : see his majesty
Return'd with glory from the Holy land.

Q. Mother. Brave sons, the worthy champions of our
God,

The honourable soldiers of the Highest,
Bear with your mother, whose abundant love 50
With tears of joy salutes your sweet return
From famous journeys hard and fortunate.
But, lords, alas, how heavy is our loss
Since your departure to these Christian wars !
The king your father, and the prince your son,
And your brave uncle, Almain's emperor,
Ay me, are dead !

Longsh. Take comfort, madam ; leave these sad laments :
Dear was my uncle, dearer was my son,
And ten times dearer was my noble father ; 60
Yet, were their lives valued at thousand worlds,
They cannot scape th' arrest of dreadful death,

Death that doth seize and summon all alike.
 Then, leaving them to heavenly blessedness,
 To join in thrones of glory with the just,
 I do salute your royal majesty,
 My gracious mother-queen, and you, my lords,
 Gilbert de Clare, Sussex, and Mortimer,
 And all the princely states of England's peers,
 With health and honour to your hearts' content. 70
 And welcome, wished England, on whose ground
 These feet so often have desir'd to tread :
 Welcome, sweet queen, my fellow traveller,
 Welcome, sweet Nell, my fellow mate in arms,
 Whose eyes have seen the slaughter'd Saracens
 Piled in the ditches of Jerusalem :
 And lastly welcome, manly followers,
 That bear the scars of honour and of arms,
 And on your war-drums carry crowns as kings,
 Crowns mural, naval, and triumphant all ; 80
 At view of whom the Turks have trembling fled
 Like sheep before the wolves, and Saracens
 Have made their cottages in walled towns ;
 But bulwarks had no fence to beat you back.
 Lords, these are they will enter brazen gates,
 And tear down lime and mortar with their nails :
 Embrace them, barons : these have got the name
 Of English gentlemen and knights-at-arms ;
 Not one of these but in the champaign field
 Hath won his crown, his collar, and his spurs. 90
 Not Caesar, leading through the streets of Rome
 The captive kings of conquer'd nations,
 Was in his princely triumphs honour'd more
 Than English Edward in this martial sight.
 Countrymen,
 Your limbs are lost in service of the Lord,

Which is your glory and your country's fame :
 For limbs you shall have living, lordships, lands,
 And be my counsellors in war's affairs.

Soldiers, sit down.—Nell, sit thee by my side.— 100
 These be Prince Edward's pompous treasury.

[*The QUEEN-MOTHER being set on the one side, and QUEEN
 ELINOR on the other, the King sits in the midst, mounted
 highest, and at his feet the ensign underneath him.*]

O glorious Capitol ! beauteous senate-house !
 Triumphant Edward, how, like sturdy oaks,
 Do these thy soldiers circle thee about,
 To shield and shelter thee from winter's storms !
 Display thy cross, old Aimes of the Vies :
 Dub on your drums, tanned with India's sun,
 My lusty western lads : Matrevers, thou
 Sound proudly here a perfect point of war
 In honour of thy sovereign's safe return. 110
 Thus Longshanks bids his soldiers *Bien venu*.

[*Use drums, trumpets, and ensigns.*]

O God, my God, the brightness of my day,
 How oft hast thou preserv'd thy servant safe,
 By sea and land, yea, in the gates of death !
 O God, to thee how highly am I bound
 For setting me with these on English ground !
 One of my mansion-houses will I give
 To be a college for my maimèd men,
 Where every one shall have an hundred marks
 Of yearly pension to his maintenance : 120
 A soldier that for Christ and country fights
 Shall want no living whilst King Edward lives.
 Lords, you that love me, now be liberal,
 And give your largess to these maimèd men.

Q. Mother. Towards this erection doth thy mother give,
 Out of her dowry, five thousand pounds of gold,

To find them surgeons to recure their wounds ;
And whilst this ancient standard-bearer lives,
He shall have forty pound of yearly fee,
And be my beadsman, father, if you please. 130

Longsh. Madam, I tell you, England never bred
A better soldier than your beadsman is ;
And that the Soldan and his army felt.

Lancaster. Out of the duchy of rich Lancaster,
To find soft bedding for their bruised bones,
Duke Edmund gives three thousand pounds.

Longsh. Gramercies, brother Edmund.
Happy is England under Edward's reign,
When men are had so highly in regard
That nobles strive who shall remunerate 140
The soldiers' resolution with regard.

My Lord of Gloucester, what is your benevolence ?

Gloucester. A thousand marks, an please your majesty.

Longsh. And yours, my Lord of Sussex ?

Sussex. Five hundred pound, an please your majesty.

Longsh. What say you, Sir David of Brecknock ?

Sir David. To a soldier Sir David cannot be too liberal :
yet that I may give no more than a poor knight is able,
and not presume as a mighty earl, I give, my lord, four
hundred, fourscore, and nineteen pounds.—And so, my
Lord of Sussex, I am behind you an ace. 151

Sussex. And yet, Sir David, ye amble after apace.

Longsh. Well said, David ! thou couldst not be a
Camber-Briton, if thou didst not love a soldier with thy
heart. Let me see now if my arithmetic will serve to
total the particulars.

Q. Elinor. Why, my lord, I hope you mean I shall be
a benefactor to my fellow soldiers.

Longsh. And well said, Nell ! what wilt thou I set
down for thee ? 160

Q. Elinor. Nay, my lord, I am of age to set it down for myself. You will allow what I do, will you not?

Longsh. That I will, madam, were it to the value of my kingdom.

Q. Elinor. What is the sum, my lord?

Longsh. Ten thousand pounds, my Nell.

Q. Elinor. Then, Elinor, bethink thee of a gift worthy the King of England's wife and the King of Spain's daughter, and give such a largess that the chronicles of this land may crake with record of thy liberality. 170

Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

[*Makes a cipher.*

There, my lord; neither one, two, nor three, but a poor cipher in agrum¹, to enrich good fellows, and compound their figure in their kind.

Longsh. Madam, I commend your composition, an argument of your honourable disposition. Sweet Nell, thou shouldst not be thyself, did not, with thy mounting mind, thy gift surmount the rest.

Gloucester. Call you this *ridiculus mus*? Marry, sir, this mouse would make a foul hole in a fair cheese. 'Tis but a cipher in agrum, and it hath made of ten thousand pounds a hundred thousand pounds. 182

Lancaster. A princely gift, and worthy memory.

Gloucester. My gracious lord, as erst I was assigned Lieutenant to his majesty, here render I up the crown, left in charge with me by your princely father King Henry;

Who on his death-bed still did call for you,
And dying will'd to you the diadem.

Longsh. Thanks, worthy lord:

190

¹ Short for 'algorithm', an old name for the Arabic numerals, derived from the surname (al-Khowarazmi) of the mathematician whose work first made them known in Europe. 'Cipher in agrum' means the figure 0.

And seeing by doom of heavens it is decreed,
 And lawful line of our succession,
 Unworthy Edward is become your king,
 We take it as a blessing from on high,
 And will our coronation be solemniz'd
 Upon the fourteenth of December next.

Q. Elinor. Upon the fourteenth of December next !

Alas, my lord, the time is all too short
 And sudden for so great solemnity :

A year were scarce enough to set a-work

200

Tailors, embroiderers, and men of rare device,
 For preparation of so great estate.

Trust me, sweet Ned, hardly shall I bethink me
 In twenty weeks what fashion robes to wear.

I pray thee, then, defer it till the spring,
 That we may have our garments point-device.

I mean to send for tailors into Spain,
 That shall confer of some fantastic suits
 With those that be our cunning'st Englishmen.

What, let me brave it now or never, Ned !

210

Longsh. Madam, contentye: would that were greatest care!
 You shall have garments to your heart's desire.

I never read but Englishmen excell'd
 For change of rare devices every way.

Q. Elinor. Yet, praythee, Ned, my love, my lord, and king,
 My fellow soldier, and compeer in arms,
 Do so much honour to thy Elinor,
 To wear a suit that she shall give thy grace ;
 Of her own cost and workmanship perhaps.

Q. Mother. 'Twill come by leisure, daughter, then, I fear :
 Thou'rt too fine-finger'd to be quick at work.

221

Longsh. 'Twixt us a greater matter breaks no square,
 So it be such, my Nell, as may beseem
 The majesty and greatness of a king.—

And now, my lords and loving friends,
Follow your general to the court,
After his travels, to repose him then,
There to recount with pleasure what is past
Of war's alarums, showers, and sharpest storms.

[*Exeunt all except Q. ELINOR and JOAN.*]

Q. Elinor. Now, Elinor, now England's lovely queen,
Bethink thee of the greatness of thy state, 231
And how to bear thyself with royalty
Above the other queens of Christendom ;
That Spain reaping renown by Elinor,
And Elinor adding renown to Spain,
Britain may her magnificence admire.—
I tell thee, Joan, what time our highness sits
Under our royal canopy of state,
Glistening with pendants of the purest gold,
Like as our seat were spangled all with stars, 240
The world shall wonder at our majesty,
As if the daughter of eternal Ops,
Turn'd to the likeness of vermilion fumes,
Where from her cloudy womb the Centaurs leapt,
Were in her royal seat enthronized.

Joan. Madam, if Joan thy daughter may advise,
Let not your honour make your manners change.
The people of this land are men of war,
The women courteous, mild, and debonair ;
Laying their lives at princes' feet 250
That govern with familiar majesty.
But if their sovereigns once 'gin swell with pride,
Disdaining commons' love, which is the strength
And sureness of the richest commonwealth,
That prince were better live a private life
Than rule with tyranny and discontent.

Q. Elinor. Indeed, we count them headstrong English-
men ;

But we shall hold them in a Spanish yoke,
 And make them know their lord and sovereign.
 Come, daughter, let us home for to provide ; 260
 For all the cunning workmen of this isle
 In our great chamber shall be set a-work,
 And in my hall shall bountifully feed.
 My king, like Phoebus, bridegroom-like, shall march
 With lovely Thetis to her glassy bed,
 And all the lookers-on shall stand amaz'd
 To see King Edward and his lovely queen
 Sit royally in England's stately throne. [Exeunt.

*Enter the Nine Lords of Scotland, with their Nine Pages ;
 GLOUCESTER, SUSSEX, KING EDWARD LONGSHANKS in
 his suit of glass, QUEEN ELINOR, the QUEEN-MOTHER,
 and JOAN : the King and Queen sit under a canopy.*

Longsh. Nobles of Scotland, we thank you all
 For this day's gentle princely service done 270
 To Edward, England's king and Scotland's lord.
 Our coronation's due solemnity
 Is ended with applause of all estates :
 Now, then, let us repose and rest us here.
 But specially we thank you, gentle lords,
 That you so well have govern'd your griefs,
 As, being grown unto a general jar,
 You choose King Edward by your messengers,
 To calm, to qualify, and to compound
 Th' ambitious strife of Scotland's climbing peers. 280
 I have no doubt, fair lords, but you well wot
 How factions waste the richest commonwealth,
 And discord spoils the seat of mighty kings.
 The barons' war, a tragic wicked war,
 Nobles, how hath it shaken England's strength !
 Industrious, it seems to me, you have

Loyally ventur'd to prevent this shock ;
For which, sith you have chosen me your judge,
My lords, will you stand to what I shall award ?

Baliol. Victorious Edward, to whom the Scottish kings
Owe homage as their lord and sovereign, 291
Amongst us nine is but one lawful king :
But might we all be judges in the case,
Then should in Scotland be nine kings at once,
And this contention never set or limited.
To stay these jars we jointly make appeal
To thy imperial throne, who knows our claims.
We stand not on our titles 'fore your grace,
But do submit ourselves to your award ;
And whom your majesty shall name our king, 300
To him we'll yield obedience as a king.
Thus willingly, and of her own accord,
Doth Scotland make great England's king her judge.

Longsh. Then, nobles, since you all agree in one,
That for a crown so disagree in all,
Since what I do shall rest irrevocable,
And, lovely England, to thy lovely queen,
Lovely Queen Elinor, unto her turn thy eye,
Whose honour cannot [choose] but love thee well ;
Hold up your hands in sight, with general voice, 310
That are content to stand to our award.

[*They all hold up their hands and say 'He shall'.*
Deliver me the golden diadem.
Lo, here I hold the goal for which ye striv'd,
And here behold, my worthy men-at-arms,
For chivalry and worthy wisdom's praise,
Worthy each one to wear a diadem :
Expect my doom, as erst at Ida hills
The goddesses divine waited th' award
Of Dardan's son. Baliol, stand farthest forth :

Baliol, behold, I give thee the Scottish crown : 320

Wear it with heart and with thankfulness.

Sound trumpets, and say all after me,

God save King Baliol, the Scottish king !

[*The trumpets sound ; all cry aloud, ' God save
King Baliol, the Scottish King.'*

Thus, lords, though you require no reason why,

According to the conscience in the cause,

I make John Baliol your anointed king.

Honour and love him, as behoves him best

That is in peace of Scotland's crown possess'd.

Baliol. Thanks, royal England, for thy honour done.

This justice that hath calm'd our civil strife, 330

Shall now be ceas'd with honourable love.

So moved of remorse and pity,

We will erect a college of my name ;

In Oxford will I build, for memory

Of Baliol's bounty and his gratitude ;

And let me happy days no longer see

Than here to England loyal I shall be.

Q. Elinor. Now, brave John Baliol, Lord of Galloway
And King of Scots, shine with thy golden head ;

Shake thy spears, in honour of his name, 340

Under whose royalty thou wear'st the same.

King Edward sets out to conquer Wales.¹ The Queen follows
him, and the Prince of Wales is born at Carnarvon.

Enter SUSSEX.

Sussex. May it please your majesty, here are four good
squires of the cantreds² where they do dwell, come in the
name of the whole country to gratulate unto your high-
ness all your good fortunes, and by me offer their most
humble service to your young son, their prince, whom

¹ There is no division of Acts and Scenes in this play.

² The Welsh equivalent of the English 'Hundred'. The original form was *Cantref*, meaning 'a hundred towns'.

they most heartily beseech God to bless with long life and honour.

Longsh. Well said, Sussex! I pray, bid them come near. [*Exit SUSSEX.*] Sir David, trust me, this is kindly done of your countrymen. 351

Sir David. [*aside*]. Villains, traitors to the ancient glory and renown of Cambria! Morris Vaughan, art thou there? And thou, proud Lord of Anglesey?

Re-enter SUSSEX with the four Barons of Wales, carrying the mantle of frieze. The Barons kneel.

First Baron. The poor country of Cambria, by us unworthy messengers, gratulates to your majesty the birth of your young son, Prince of Wales, and in this poor present express their most zealous duty and affection, which with all humbleness we present to your highness' sweet and sacred hands. 360

Longsh. Gramercies, barons, for your gifts and good-wills: by this means my boy shall wear a mantle of his country's weaving to keep him warm, and live for England's honour and Cambria's good. I shall not need, I trust, courteously to invite you; I doubt not, lords, but you will be in readiness to wait on your young prince, and do him honour at his christening. 367

Sussex. The whole country of Cambria round about, all well-horsed and attended on, both men and women in their best array, are come down to do service of love and honour to our late-born prince, your majesty's son and honey: the men and women of Snowdon especially have sent in great abundance of cattle and corn, enough by computation for your highness' household a whole month and more. 375

Longsh. We thank them all; and will present our queen with these courtesies and presents bestowed on her young son, and greatly account you for our friends.

[*Exeunt Barons.*]

The Queen's tent opens.

Q. Elinor. Who talketh there?

Longsh. A friend, madam.

380

Joan. Madam, it is the king.

Elinor. Welcome, my lord. Heigh-ho, what have we there?

Longsh. Madam, the country, in all kindness and duty, recommend their service and goodwill to your son; and, in token of their pure goodwill, present him by us with a mantle of frieze, richly lined to keep him warm.

387

Elinor. A mantle of frieze! fie, fie! for God's sake let me hear no more of it, an if you love me. Fie, my lord! is this the wisdom and kindness of the country? Now I commend me to them all, and if Wales have no more wit or manners than to clothe a king's son in frieze, I have a mantle in store for my boy that shall, I trow, make him shine like the sun, and perfume the streets where he comes.

Longsh. In good time, madam; he is your own; lap him as you list: but I promise thee, Nell, I would not for ten thousand pounds the country should take unkindness at thy words.

Elinor. 'Tis no marvel, sure; you have been royally received at their hands.

400

No, Ned, but that thy Nell doth want her will,

Her boy should glisten like the summer's sun,

In robes as rich as Jove when he triumphs.

His pap should be of precious nectar made,

His food ambrosia—no earthly woman's milk;

Sweet fires of cinnamon to open¹ him by;

The Graces on his cradle should attend;

Venus should make his bed and wait on him,

And Phoebus' daughter sing him still asleep.

Thus would I have my boy us'd as divine,

410

Because he is King Edward's son and mine:

¹ unswathe.

And do you mean to make him up in frieze ?
 For God's sake lay it up charily and perfume it against
 winter ; it will make him a goodly warm Christmas coat.

Longsh. Ah, Mun,¹ my brother, dearer than my life,
 How this proud humour slays my heart with grief !—
 Sweet queen, how much I pity the effects !
 This Spanish pride 'grees not with England's prince :
 Mild is the mind where honour builds his bower,
 And yet is earthly honour but a flower. 420
 Fast to those looks are all my fancies tied,
 Pleas'd with thy sweetness, angry with thy pride.

The Lady Mayoress offends Queen Elinor by the state that
 she keeps. Elinor murders her.

Thunder and lightning. Enter QUEEN ELINOR and JOAN.

Q. Elinor. Why, Joan,
 Is this the welcome that the clouds afford ?
 How dare these disturb our thoughts, knowing
 That I am Edward's wife and England's Queen,
 Here thus on Charing-Green to threaten me ?

Joan. Ah, mother, blaspheme not so !
 Your blaspheming and other wicked deeds
 Have caus'd our God to terrify your thoughts. 430
 And call to mind your sinful fact committed
 Against the Mayoress here of lovely London,
 And better Mayoress London never bred,
 So full of ruth and pity to the poor :
 Her have you made away,
 That London cries for vengeance on your head.

Q. Elinor. I rid her not ; I made her not away !
 By heaven I swear, traitors
 They are to Edward and to England's Queen
 That say I made away the Mayoress. 440

¹ i. e. Edmund.

Joan. Take heed, sweet lady-mother, swear not so :
A field of prize-corn will not stop their mouths
That say you have made away that virtuous woman.

Q. Elinor. Gape, earth, and swallow me, and let my soul
Sink down to hell, if I were author of
That woman's tragedy !—O Joan, help, Joan,
Thy mother sinks ! [*The earth opens and swallows her up.*

*Enter the Potter's Wife and JOHN at the place called the
Potter's-Hive.¹*

Potter's Wife. John, come away : you go as though you
slept. A great knave, and be afraid of a little thundering
and lightening ! Will it please you to carry the lantern
a little handsomer, and not to carry it with your hands in
your slops ? 452

John. Slops, quoth you ! Would I had tarried at home
by the fire, and then I should not have need to put my
hands in my pockets ! But I'll lay my life I know the
reason of this foul weather.

Potter's Wife. Do you know the reason ? I pray thee,
John, tell me, and let me hear this reason. 455

John. I lay my life some of your gossips be cross-
legged that we came from : but you are wise, mistress,
for you come now away, and will not stay a-gossiping in
a dry house all night.

Potter's Wife. Would it please you to walk, and leave off
your knavery ? [*QUEEN ELINOR rises gradually out of the
earth.*] But stay, John : what's that riseth out of the
ground ? Jesus bless us, John ! look how it riseth higher
and higher !

John. By my troth, mistress, 'tis a woman. Good Lord,
do women grow ? I never saw none grow before. 459

Potter's Wife. Hold thy tongue, thou foolish knave :
it is the spirit of some woman.

Properly 'Potter's Hithe' : the old name for Queenhithe.

Q. Elinor. Ha, let me see ; where am I ? On Charing-Green ? Aye, on Charing-Green here, hard by Westminster, where I was crowned, and Edward there made king. Aye, 'tis true ; so it is : and therefore, Edward, kiss not me, unless you will straight perfume your lips, Edward.

Potter's Wife. *Ora pro nobis !* John, I pray, fall to your prayers. For my life, it is the queen that chafes thus, who sunk this day on Charing-Green, and now is risen up on Potter's-Hive ; and therefore truly, John, I'll go to her.

[*Goes to Q. ELINOR.*

Q. Elinor. Welcome, good woman. What place is this ? sea or land ? I pray show to me. 482

Potter's Wife. Your grace need not to fear : you are on firm ground : it is the Potter's-Hive : and therefore cheer your majesty, for I will see you safe conducted to the court, if case your highness be therewithal pleased.

Q. Elinor. Aye, good woman, conduct me to the court, That there I may bewail my sinful life,
And call to God to save my wretched soul.

[*A cry of 'Westward, ho !'*

Woman, what noise is this I hear ? 490

Potter's Wife. An like your grace, it is the watermen that call for passengers to go westward now.

Q. Elinor. That fits my turn, for I will straight with them
To King's-town to the court,
And there repose me till the king come home.
And therefore, sweet woman, conceal what thou hast seen,
And lead me to these watermen, for here
Doth Elinor droop. 498

John. Come, come ; here's a goodly leading of you, is there not ? first, you must make us afeard, and now I must be troubled in carrying of you. I would you were honestly laid in your bed, so that I were not troubled with you.

[*Exeunt.*

324 DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA

The Queen dies penitent, confessing her sins. Joan, learning that she is of base parentage, dies of grief. Gloucester, to whom Joan was betrothed, enters at the moment of her death.

Longsh. Gloucester, thy king is partner of thy heaviness,

Although nor tongue nor eyes bewray his mean ;
 For I have lost a flower as fair as thine,
 A love more dear, for Elinor is dead.
 But since the heavenly ordinance decrees
 That all things change in their prefixed time,
 Be thou content, and bear it in thy breast,
 Thy swelling grief, as need is I must mine. 510
 Thy Joan of Acon, and my queen deceas'd,
 Shall have that honour as beseems their state.
 You peers of England, see in royal pomp
 These breathless bodies be entomb'd straight,
 With 'tired colours cover'd all with black.
 Let Spanish steeds, as swift as fleeting wind,
 Convey these princes to their funeral :
 Before them let a hundred mourners ride.
 In every time of their enforc'd abode,
 Rear up a cross in token of their worth, 520
 Whereon fair Elinor's picture shall be plac'd.
 Arriv'd at London, near our palace-bounds,
 Inter my lovely Elinor, late deceas'd ;
 And, in remembrance of her royalty,
 Erect a rich and stately carved cross,
 Whereon her statue shall with glory shine,
 And henceforth see you call it Charing-cross ;
 For why the chariest ¹ and the choicest queen,
 That ever did delight my royal eyes,
 There dwells in darkness whilst I die in grief. 530

¹ Probably from *chère*. See note on p. 805.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA. PART II.

IF Peele's *Edward I* opens the way toward the Histories of Shakespeare, Marlowe's *Edward II*, produced only a few months later, carries us to their very frontier-line.¹ On all grounds it is the greatest of our pre-Shakespearean dramas; in firmness of construction, in stateliness of verse, above all in the depiction of its two principal characters, it reaches a height to which even Marlowe's earlier work had not attained.

We have already suggested that Marlowe's conception of character was static rather than dynamic, and this view is well exemplified by the presentation of King Edward. Throughout the entire play he is uniformly and contemptibly weak: quailing before all opposition, shrinking from every crisis, capable of no higher feeling than a watery and inconstant affection. He thinks less of a serious danger to the kingdom than of the pageant which is to welcome his favourite's return. He speaks a few pettish words about the royal prerogative, but he allows the barons to stab Gaveston in his presence. Defied and overborne by Warwick and Leicester he retaliates upon the Queen, the one person whom he believes that he can insult with impunity. When he hears that Gaveston has been murdered his first words are

Oh! shall I speak or shall I sigh and die?
and the threat of vengeance, to which, a few lines

¹ The dates are significant: Peele's *Edward I* about 1590, Marlowe's *Edward II* about 1591, *Henry VI*, 1592, *Richard III* and *Richard II*, 1598.

later, even his anaemic nature is stirred, closes with the appointment of a new favourite. At the outbreak of civil war he flies without striking a blow, and when captured has no thought but that he must bid farewell to 'sweet Spenser'. His abdication of the throne wavers between petulant reproaches and unmanly lamentations: at one moment he nerves himself to refuse, and when the nobles have left the presence-chamber calls them back that he may acquiesce. Nowhere in literature has the character of a coward been more trenchantly analysed. His vacillating temper, his feeble sentimentalism, his shrill insistence on a majesty which he knows that he cannot maintain, his total inability to hold any steadfast purpose or understand any public cause, these and a hundred similar qualities are painted with a mastery in which every stroke tells and every line is significant. Yet when the death-scene comes we forget all our contempt and all our resentment. Not that he rises to his fate; he sinks, if possible, to a lower level than before; but his very helplessness enhances the pathos. The sordid, squalid indignities that are heaped upon him, the savage irony of his murderer's feigned compassion, the suspense, the broken slumber, the unavailing cry for pity—it is, like the torture of a dumb animal, infinitely more painful than any tragedy of human conflict.

Isabella is an even finer psychological study: the only one in which Marlowe has clearly displayed the interaction of character and circumstance. Her first scene with Edward¹ is, we must confess, out of the picture: her submission is there too abject, and it is possible either that Marlowe wrote the scene hastily, wishing only to emphasize the contrast of situation between her and Gaveston, or,

¹ Act i, sc. 8. It is not quoted in the accompanying selection, but should be read in the complete text of the play.

more probably, that the portrait grew under his hand. At any rate, from thenceforth to the end of the drama she presents a consistent solution of a very difficult and complex problem. In estimating it we must dismiss from our memory the 'She-wolf of France'. Marlowe's *Isabella* is a clinging, dependent woman with a quick brain and a hesitating will, passionately desirous of affection, wounded to the heart by scorn and neglect, subtle in plan, yet fearing the responsibilities of decision, without real strength or foresight, yet compelled by events to assume a leadership which she cannot sustain. At the outset of the play she loves her husband intensely, and with equal intensity hates the rival before whom she is humiliated. Edward lays on her the odious task of pleading for Gaveston's recall: she looks no further than the moment, obeys because obedience will please the one and endanger the other, hits upon the only argument which will effect her double purpose, and induces Mortimer to act as her spokesman. The favourite returns, the king's infatuation redoubles, but her patience is not yet exhausted, and when Gaveston is put to death by the barons she is still in hopes of a reconciliation with her husband. At that moment news arrives that Normandy is lost, and Edward, who has no leisure for affairs of state, sends her over to treat for its recovery. She has no sooner left England than he takes a new favourite, the young Spenser, and from that moment she gives him up. When, on the failure of her French mission, Prince Edward advises her to return home, she answers in hopeless despair:—

Ah, boy! thou art deceived at least in this,
To think that we can yet be tuned together!
No, no, we jar too far.

During all this period of sorrow and disappointment her sole reliance has been on Mortimer, the

one baron who has shown her invariable respect and sympathy. Her feeling for him is not yet more than a passionate gratitude: the only sentence in which she confesses to herself that she could love him breaks off abruptly into plans for recovering the affection of Edward; but the frontier is dangerously near, and the present crisis drives her across it. She cannot stay in France, for Valois has declared against her. She cannot go back to her husband, for he is beyond reconciliation. At this juncture Sir John Hainault and Mortimer come to her with the project of a rebellion against Edward's misgovernment, and she throws in her lot with them. She returns to England full of misgivings, and her first words make so desperate an attempt to justify her action that Mortimer himself checks her:—

Nay, madam, if you are a warrior
You must not be so passionate in speeches.

Her anxieties are increased by the presence of her son, Prince Edward, love for whom is the deepest feeling that she possesses: and in this clash of impulses we can see her forcing her resolution beyond the point of proof, we can watch all her movements of doubt and hesitancy. If Edward is victorious she and her son are outlaws with a price upon their heads. If Edward dies her son will be king and she will be free to marry Mortimer. Yet on the other hand there is the blackness of crime, the sting of dishonour, the tattered memory of an old love. She is tossed by a storm of conflicting emotions, passion no longer innocent, fear that urges cruelty, pity that recoils from it: at one instant she says to Mortimer:—

Therefore, so the prince my son be safe
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt;

at the next, hearing that Edward is lying, a broken man, in his prison, she cries, in a tone that is not wholly false:—

Alas! poor soul, would I could ease his grief.

Even when Edward's capture forces on her the necessity of action she still hesitates: she looks to Mortimer for initiative, and the death-warrant, which she steels herself into signing, is carefully ambiguous in phrase. The murder is committed, and, the danger once removed, her overstrained courage collapses like a house of cards. Prince Edward rises in horror and indignation to denounce the murderers: she makes no further resistance, no further effort, she offers one unavailing plea for Mortimer's life, and passes with bowed head to her condemnation.

A lesser dramatist might well have made her a more obvious foil to Edward, and have represented her as the fierce and treacherous woman whom history records. Marlowe, with far higher skill, derives her character, like that of her husband, from essential weakness, and places her in circumstances that can only be mastered by essential strength. She is not made for great crimes or great heroisms, she has no force, no initiative, no vigour of personality: even her love for Prince Edward is concerned and fluttering, her love for Mortimer is born from her need of support. The sinister purpose which springs up in her life is, to quote Goethe's image, like a tree planted in a flower-vase, and the expansion of its growth shatters her to pieces.

NOTE. Three other historical plays of this period are worth mentioning: *The Troublesome Reign of King John* and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, both of which were used by Shakespeare; and *Edward III*, a fine drama of anonymous authorship, which was long attributed to him. The historical plays of the early seventeenth century are few in number, and, with the exception of *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Henry VIII*, and *Perkin Warbeck*, are of comparatively little account.

EDWARD II

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

KING EDWARD THE SECOND.	BISHOP OF COVENTRY.
PRINCE EDWARD, his Son, afterwards King Edward the Third.	BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.
EARL OF KENT, Brother of King Edward the Second.	BALDOCK.
GAVESTON.	BEAUMONT.
WARWICK.	TRUSSEL.
LANCASTER.	GURNEY.
PEMBROKE.	MATREVIS.
ARUNDEL.	LIGHTBORN.
LEICESTER.	SIR JOHN OF HAINAULT.
BERKELEY.	LEVUNE.
MORTIMER, the elder.	RICE AP HOWEL.
MORTIMER, the younger, his Nephew.	Abbot, Monks, Herald, Lords, Poor Men, James, Mower, Champion, Messengers, Sol- diers, and Attendants.
SPENSER, the elder.	QUEEN ISABELLA, Wife of King Edward the Second.
SPENSER, the younger, his Son.	Niece to King Edward the Second, daughter of the Duke of Gloucester.
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTER- BURY.	Ladies.

On the death of Edward I, Gaveston, whom he had banished, is recalled by Edward II.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter KING EDWARD, LANCASTER, the Elder MORTIMER, Young MORTIMER, KENT, WARWICK, PEMBROKE, and Attendants. GAVESTON *concealed*.

K. Edw. Lancaster !

Lan. My lord.

Gav. That Earl of Lancaster do I abhor. *[Aside.*

K. Edw. Will you not grant me this ? In spite of them I'll have my will ; and these two Mortimers,

That cross me thus, shall know I am displeased. [*Aside.*

E. Mor. If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston.

Gav. That villain Mortimer ! I'll be his death. [*Aside.*

Y. Mor. Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself,
Were sworn to your father at his death, 10
That he should ne'er return into the realm :
And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,
This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,
Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,
And underneath thy banners march who will,
For Mortimer will hang his armour up.

Gav. Mort Dieu ! [*Aside.*

K. Edw. Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words.
Beseems it thee to contradict thy king ?
Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster ? 20
The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,
And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.
I will have Gaveston ; and you shall know
What danger 'tis to stand against your king.

Gav. Well done, Ned ! [*Aside.*

Lan. My lord, why do you thus incense your peers,
That naturally would love and honour you
But for that base and obscure Gaveston ?
Four earldoms have I, besides Lancaster—
Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester,— 30
These will I sell, to give my soldiers pay,
Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm ;
Therefore, if he be come, expel him straight.

Kent. Barons and earls, your pride hath made me mute ;
But now I'll speak, and to the proof, I hope.
I do remember, in my father's days,
Lord Percy of the north, being highly moved,
Braved Moubery in presence of the king ;
For which, had not his highness loved him well,

He should have lost his head ; but with his look 40
 The undaunted spirit of Percy was appeased,
 And Moubery and he were reconciled :
 Yet dare you brave the king unto his face.—
 Brother, revenge it, and let these their heads
 Preach upon poles for trespass of their tongues.

War. Oh, our heads !

K. Edw. Aye, yours ; and therefore I would wish you
 grant—

War. Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer.

Y. Mor. I cannot, nor I will not ; I must speak.—
 Cousin, our hands, I hope, shall fence our heads, 50
 And strike off his that makes you threaten us.
 Come, uncle, let us leave the brain-sick king,
 And henceforth parley with our naked swords.

E. Mor. Wiltshire hath men enough to save our heads.

War. All Warwickshire will love him for my sake.

Lan. And northward Lancaster hath many friends.—
 Adieu, my lord ; and either change your mind,
 Or look to see the throne, where you should sit,
 To float in blood ; and at thy wanton head,
 The glozing head of thy base minion thrown. 60

[*Exeunt all except KING EDWARD, KENT, GAVESTON and Attendants.*

K. Edw. I cannot brook these haughty menaces ;
 Am I a king, and must be overruled ?—
 Brother, display my ensigns in the field ;
 I'll bandy with the barons and the earls,
 And either die or live with Gaveston.

Gav. I can no longer keep me from my lord.

[*Comes forward.*

K. Edw. What, Gaveston ! welcome !—Kiss not my
 hand—
 Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee.

Why shouldst thou kneel? know'st thou not who I am?
 Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston! 70
 Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules
 Than thou hast been of me since thy exile.

Gav. And since I went from hence, no soul in hell
 Hath felt more torment than poor Gaveston.

K. Edw. I know it.—Brother, welcome home my friend.
 Now let the treacherous Mortimers conspire,
 And that high-minded Earl of Lancaster:
 I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight;
 And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land
 Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence. 80
 I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,
 Chief Secretary to the state and me,
 Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.

Gav. My lord, these titles far exceed my worth.

Kent. Brother, the least of these may well suffice
 For one of greater birth than Gaveston.

K. Edw. Cease, brother: for I cannot brook these
 words.

Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts,
 Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart;
 If for these dignities thou be envied, 90
 I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,
 Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.
 Fear'st thou thy person? thou shalt have a guard:
 Wantest thou gold? go to my treasury:
 Wouldst thou be loved and feared? receive my seal;
 Save or condemn, and in our name command
 Whatso thy mind affects, or fancy likes.

Gav. It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
 Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
 As Caesar riding in the Roman street, 100
 With captive kings at his triumphant car.

Enter the BISHOP of COVENTRY.

K. Edw. Whither goes my lord of Coventry so fast?

B. of Cov. To celebrate your father's exequies.
But is that wicked Gaveston returned?

K. Edw. Aye, priest, and lives to be revenged on thee,
That wert the only cause of his exile.

Gav. 'Tis true; and but for reverence of these robes,
Thou shouldst not plod one foot beyond this place.

B. of Cov. I did no more than I was bound to do;
And, Gaveston, unless thou be reclaimed, 110
As then I did incense the parliament,
So will I now, and thou shalt back to France.

Gav. Saving your reverence, you must pardon me.

K. Edw. Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,
And in the channel¹ christen him anew.

Kent. Ah, brother, lay not violent hands on him!
For he'll complain unto the see of Rome.

Gav. Let him complain unto the see of hell;
I'll be revenged on him for my exile.

K. Edw. No, spare his life, but seize upon his goods:
Be thou lord bishop and receive his rents, 121
And make him serve thee as thy chaplain:
I give him thee—here, use him as thou wilt.

Gav. He shall to prison, and there die in bolts.

K. Edw. Aye, to the Tower, the Fleet, or where thou wilt.

B. of Cov. For this offence, be thou accurst of God!

K. Edw. Who's there? Convey this priest to the Tower.

B. of Cov. True, true.

K. Edw. But in the meantime, Gaveston, away,
And take possession of his house and goods. 130
Come, follow me, and thou shalt have my guard
To see it done, and bring thee safe again.

Gav. What should a priest do with so fair a house?
A priest may best beseech his holiness. [Exeunt.

¹ I.e. kennel of the street.

ACT I. SCENE II.

*Enter on one side the two MORTIMERS ; on the other,
WARWICK and LANCASTER.*

War. 'Tis true, the bishop is in the Tower,
And goods and body given to Gaveston.

Lan. What ! will they tyrannize upon the church ?
Ah, wicked king ! accursèd Gaveston !
This ground, which is corrupted with their steps,
Shall be their timeless sepulchre or mine.

Y. Mor. Well, let that peevish Frenchman guard him
sure ;
Unless his breast be sword-proof he shall die.

E. Mor. How now ! why droops the Earl of Lancaster ?

Y. Mor. Wherefore is Guy of Warwick discontent ? 10

Lan. That villain Gaveston is made an earl.

E. Mor. An earl !

War. Aye, and besides Lord Chamberlain of the realm,
And Secretary too, and Lord of Man.

E. Mor. We may not, nor we will not suffer this.

Y. Mor. Why post we not from hence to levy men ?

Lan. 'My Lord of Cornwall,' now at every word !
And happy is the man whom he vouchsafes,
For vailing of his bonnet, one good look.
Thus, arm in arm, the king and he doth march : 20
Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits ;
And all the court begins to flatter him.

War. Thus leaning on the shoulder of the king,
He nods and scorns and smiles at those that pass.

E. Mor. Doth no man take exceptions at the slave ?

Lan. All stomach him, but none dare speak a word.

Y. Mor. Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancaster !
Were all the earls and barons of my mind,
We'd hale him from the bosom of the king,

And at the court-gate hang the peasant up, 30
 Who, swoln with venom of ambitious pride,
 Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

War. Here comes my lord of Canterbury's grace.

Lan. His countenance bewrays he is displeased.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY and an
 Attendant.*

A. of Cant. First were his sacred garments rent and torn,
 Then laid they violent hands upon him ; next
 Himself imprisoned, and his goods asseized :
 This certify the Pope ;—away, take horse. [*Exit Attend.*

Lan. My lord, will you take arms against the king ?

A. of Cant. What need I ? God himself is up in arms
 When violence is offered to the church. 41

Y. Mor. Then will you join with us, that be his peers,
 To banish or behead that Gaveston ?

A. of Cant. What else, my lords ? for it concerns me
 near ;—
 The bishopric of Coventry is his.

Enter QUEEN ISABELLA.

Y. Mor. Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast ?

Q. Isab. Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,
 To live in grief and baleful discontent ;
 For now, my lord, the king regards me not,
 But doats upon the love of Gaveston. 50
 He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,
 Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears ;
 And when I come he frowns, as who should say,
 'Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston.'

E. Mor. Is it not strange that he is thus bewitched ?

Y. Mor. Madam, return unto the court again :
 That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exile,
 Or lose our lives ; and yet, ere that day come,

The king shall lose his crown ; for we have power,
And courage too, to be revenged at full. 60

Q. Isab. But yet lift not your swords against the king.

Lan. No ; but we will lift Gaveston from hence.

War. And war must be the means, or he'll stay still.

Q. Isab. Then let him stay ; for rather than my lord
Shall be oppressed with civil mutinies,
I will endure a melancholy life,
And let him frolic with his minion.

A. of Cant. Mylords, to ease all this, but hear me speak :—
We and the rest, that are his counsellors,
Will meet, and with a general consent 70
Confirm his banishment with our hands and seals.

Lan. What we confirm the king will frustrate.

Y. Mor. Then may we lawfully revolt from him.

War. But say, my lord, where shall this meeting be ?

A. of Cant. At the New Temple.

Y. Mor. Content.

A. of Cant. And, in the meantime, I'll entreat you all
To cross to Lambeth, and there stay with me.

Lan. Come then, let's away.

Y. Mor. Madam, farewell ! 80

Q. Isab. Farewell, sweet Mortimer ; and, for my sake,
Forbear to levy arms against the king.

Y. Mor. Aye, if words will serve ; if not, I must.

[*Exeunt.*]

The barons demand Gaveston's banishment. Edward resists at first, but is overpowered by them and finally gives way. Isabella, anxious at all hazards to win back her husband's love, pleads with Mortimer for Gaveston's recall. After some debate the barons agree, on the ground that he may be a greater danger in Ireland than in England ; but their acquiescence only strengthens their feeling of enmity against him.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Enter KING EDWARD, QUEEN ISABELLA, KENT, LANCASTER,
Young MORTIMER, WARWICK, PEMBROKE, and Attendants.

K. Edw. The wind is good, I wonder why he stays ;
I fear me he is wrecked upon the sea.

Q. Isab. Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is,
And still his mind runs on his minion !

Lan. My lord,—

K. Edw. How now ! what news ? is Gaveston arrived ?

Y. Mor. Nothing but Gaveston ! what means your grace ?
You have matters of more weight to think upon ;
The King of France sets foot in Normandy.

K. Edw. A trifle ! we'll expel him when we please. 10
But tell me, Mortimer, what's thy device
Against the stately triumph we decreed ?

Y. Mor. A homely one, my lord, not worth the telling.

K. Edw. Pray thee let me know it.

Y. Mor. But, seeing you are so desirous, thus it is :
A lofty cedar-tree, fair flourishing,
On whose top-branches kingly eagles perch,
And by the bark a canker creeps me up,
And gets into the highest bough of all :
The motto, *Aequè tandem*.¹

20

K. Edw. And what is yours, my lord of Lancaster ?

Lan. My lord, mine's more obscure than Mortimer's.
Pliny reports there is a flying fish
Which all the other fishes deadly hate,
And therefore, being pursued, it takes the air :
No sooner is it up, but there's a fowl
That seizeth it ; this fish, my lord, I bear,
The motto this : *Undique mors est*.²

¹ 'Level at last.'

² 'Death is on every hand.'

Kent. Proud Mortimer ! ungentle Lancaster !
 Is this the love you bear your sovereign ? 30
 Is this the fruit your reconciliation bears ?
 Can you in words make show of amity,
 And in your shields display your rancorous minds !
 What call you this but private libelling
 Against the Earl of Cornwall and my brother ?

Q. Isab. Sweet husband, be content, they all love you.

K. Edw. They love me not that hate my Gaveston.
 I am that cedar, shake me not too much ;
 And you the eagles ; soar ye ne'er so high,
 I have the jesses that will pull you down ; 40
 And *Aeque tandem* shall that canker cry
 Unto the proudest peer of Brittainy.
 Though thou compar'st him to a flying fish,
 And threatenest death whether he rise or fall,
 'Tis not the hugest monster of the sea,
 Nor foulest harpy that shall swallow him.

Y. Mor. If in his absence thus he favours him,
 What will he do whenas he shall be present ?

Lan. That shall we see ; look where his lordship comes.

Enter GAVESTON.

K. Edw. My Gaveston ! 50
 Welcome to Tynemouth ! welcome to thy friend !
 Thy absence made me droop and pine away ;
 For, as the lovers of fair Danae,
 When she was locked up in a brazen tower,
 Desired her more, and waxed outrageous,
 So did it fare with me : and now thy sight
 Is sweeter far than was thy parting hence
 Bitter and irksome to my sobbing heart.

Gav. Sweet lord and king, your speech preventeth
 mine,

Yet have I words left to express my joy : 60
 The shepherd nipt with biting winter's rage
 Frolics not more to see the painted spring,
 Than I do to behold your majesty.

K. Edw. Will none of you salute my Gaveston ?

Lan. Salute him ? yes ; welcome, Lord Chamberlain !

Y. Mor. Welcome is the good Earl of Cornwall !

War. Welcome, Lord Governor of the Isle of Man !

Pem. Welcome, Master Secretary !

Kent. Brother, do you hear them ?

K. Edw. Still will these earls and barons use me thus.

Gav. My lord, I cannot brook these injuries. 71

Q. Isab. Ay me, poor soul, when these begin to jar.

[*Aside.*

K. Edw. Return it to their throats, I'll be thy warrant.

Gav. Base, leaden earls, that glory in your birth,
 Go sit at home and eat your tenant's beef ;
 And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
 Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low
 As to bestow a look on such as you.

Lan. Yet I disdain not to do this for you.

[*Draws his sword and offers to stab GAVESTON.*

K. Edw. Treason ! treason ! where 's the traitor ? 80

Pem. Here ! here !

K. Edw. Convey hence Gaveston ; they'll murder him.

Gav. The life of thee shall salve this foul disgrace.

Y. Mor. Villain ! thy life, unless I miss mine aim.

[*Wounds GAVESTON.*

Q. Isab. Ah ! furious Mortimer, what hast thou done ?

Y. Mor. No more than I would answer, were he slain.

[*Exit GAVESTON with Attendants.*

K. Edw. Yes, more than thou canst answer, though
 he live ;

Dear shall you both abide this riotous deed.

Out of my presence ! come not near the court.

Y. Mor. I'll not be barred the court for Gaveston. 90

Lan. We'll hale him by the ears unto the block.

K. Edw. Look to your own heads ; his is sure enough.

War. Look to your own crown, if you back him thus.

Kent. Warwick, these words do ill beseeem thy years.

K. Edw. Nay, all of them conspire to cross me thus ;
But if I live, I'll tread upon their heads
That think with high looks thus to tread me down.
Come, Edmund, let's away and levy men,
'Tis war that must abate these barons' pride.

[*Exeunt* KING EDWARD, QUEEN ISABELLA,
and KENT.

War. Let's to our castles, for the king is moved. 100

Y. Mor. Moved may he be, and perish in his wrath !

Lan. Cousin, it is no dealing with him now,
He means to make us stoop by force of arms ;
And therefore let us jointly here protest,
To persecute that Gaveston to the death.

Y. Mor. By heaven, the abject villain shall not live !

War. I'll have his blood, or die in seeking it.

Pem. The like oath Pembroke takes.

Lan. And so doth Lancaster.

Now send our heralds to defy the king ; 110
And make the people swear to put him down.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Enter LANCASTER, WARWICK, YOUNG MORTIMER,
and others. *Alarums within.*

Lan. I wonder how he 'scaped !

Y. Mor. Who's this ? the queen !

Q. Isab. Aye, Mortimer, the miserable queen,
Whose pining heart her inward sighs have blasted,
And body with continual mourning wasted :

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These hands are tired with haling of my lord
From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston,
And all in vain ; for, when I speak him fair,
He turns away, and smiles upon his minion.

Y. Mor. Cease to lament, and tell us where's the king ?

Q. Isab. What would you with the king ? is't him you
seek ? 11

Lan. No, madam, but that cursèd Gaveston.
Far be it from the thought of Lancaster
To offer violence to his sovereign.

We would but rid the realm of Gaveston :
Tell us where he remains, and he shall die.

Q. Isab. He's gone by water unto Scarborough ;
Pursue him quickly, and he cannot 'scape ;
The king hath left him, and his train is small. 19

War. Foreslow no time, sweet Lancaster ; let's march.

Y. Mor. How comes it that the king and he is parted ?

Q. Isab. That thus your army, going several ways,
Might be of lesser force : and with the power
That he intendeth presently to raise,
Be easily suppressed ; therefore be gone.

Y. Mor. Here in the river rides a Flemish hoy ;
Let's all aboard, and follow him amain.

Lan. The wind that bears him hence will fill our sails ;
Come, come aboard, 'tis but an hour's sailing.

Y. Mor. Madam, stay you within this castle here. 30

Q. Isab. No, Mortimer, I'll to my lord the king.

Y. Mor. Nay, rather sail with us to Scarborough.

Q. Isab. You know the king is so suspicious,
As if he hear I have but talked with you,
Mine honour will be called in question ;
And therefore, gentle Mortimer, be gone.

Y. Mor. Madam, I cannot stay to answer you,
But think of Mortimer as he deserves.

[*Exeunt all except QUEEN ISABELLA.*]

Q. Isab. So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer,
As Isabel could live with thee for ever. 40
In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,
Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston.
Yet once more I'll importune him with prayer:
If he be strange and not regard my words,
My son and I will over into France,
And to the king my brother there complain,
How Gaveston hath robbed me of his love:
But yet I hope my sorrows will have end,
And Gaveston this blessed day be slain. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE II.

*Enter KING EDWARD and YOUNG SPENCER, BALDOCK, and
Nobles of the KING's side, and Soldiers with drums
and fifes.*

Enter QUEEN ISABELLA, PRINCE EDWARD, and LEVUNE.

K. Edw. Madam, what news?

Q. Isab. News of dishonour, lord, and discontent.
Our friend Levune, faithful and full of trust,
Informeth us, by letters and by words,
That Lord Valois our brother, King of France,
Because your highness hath been slack in homage,
Hath seized Normandy into his hands.
These be the letters, this the messenger.

K. Edw. Welcome, Levune. Tush, Sib, if this be all,
Valois and I will soon be friends again.— 10
But to my Gaveston; shall I never see,
Never behold thee now?—Madam, in this matter,
We will employ you and your little son;
You shall go parley with the King of France.—
Boy, see you bear you bravely to the king,
And do your message with a majesty.

P. Edw. Commit not to my youth things of more weight

Than fits a prince so young as I to bear,
 And fear not, lord and father, Heaven's great beams
 On Atlas' shoulder shall not lie more safe 20
 Than shall your charge committed to my trust.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy! this towardness makes thy mother
 fear

Thou art not marked to many days on earth.

K. Edw. Madam, we will that you with speed be shipped,
 And this our son; Levune shall follow you
 With all the haste we can dispatch him hence.
 Choose of our lords to bear you company;
 And go in peace, leave us in wars at home.

Q. Isab. Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their
 king;
 God end them once! My lord, I take my leave, 30
 To make my preparation for France.

[*Exit with PRINCE EDWARD.*]

Enter ARUNDEL.

K. Edw. What, Lord Arundel, dost thou come alone?

Arun. Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.

K. Edw. Ah, traitors! have they put my friend to death?
 Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st,
 Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?

Arun. Neither, my lord; for as he was surprised,
 Begirt with weapons and with enemies round,
 I did your highness' message to them all;
 Demanding him of them, entreating rather, 40
 And said, upon the honour of my name,
 That I would undertake to carry him
 Unto your highness, and to bring him back.

K. Edw. And tell me, would the rebels deny me that?

Y. Spen. Proud recreants!

K. Edw. Yea, Spencer, traitors all.

Arun. I found them at the first inexorable ;
 The Earl of Warwick would not bide the hearing,
 Mortimer hardly ; Pembroke and Lancaster
 Spake least : and when they flatly had denied, 50
 Refusing to receive me pledge for him,
 The Earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake ;
 ' My lords, because our sovereign sends for him,
 And promiseth he shall be safe returned,
 I will this undertake, to have him hence,
 And see him re-delivered to your hands.'

K. Edw. Well, and how fortunes it that he came not ?

Y. Spen. Some treason, or some villany, was the cause.

Arun. The Earl of Warwick seized him on his way ;
 For being delivered unto Pembroke's men, 60
 Their lord rode home thinking his prisoner safe ;
 But ere he came, Warwick in ambush lay,
 And bare him to his death ; and in a trench
 Strake off his head, and marched unto the camp.

Y. Spen. A bloody part, flatly 'gainst law of arms !

K. Edw. Oh, shall I speak, or shall I sigh and die !

Y. Spen. My lord, refer your vengeance to the sword
 Upon these barons ; hearten up your men ;
 Let them not unrevenged murder your friends !
 Advance your standard, Edward, in the field, 70
 And march to fire them from their starting holes.

K. Edw. [*kneeling*]. By earth, the common mother of
 us all,
 By Heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,
 By this right hand, and by my father's sword,
 And all the honours 'longing to my crown,
 I will have heads, and lives for him, as many
 As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers !— [*Rises.*
 Treacherous Warwick ! traitorous Mortimer !
 If I be England's king, in lakes of gore

Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail, 80
 That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
 And stain my royal standard with the same,
 That so my bloody colours may suggest
 Remembrance of revenge immortally
 On your accursed traitorous progeny,
 You villains, that have slain my Gaveston !
 And in this place of honour and of trust,
 Spencer, sweet Spencer, I adopt thee here :
 And merely of our love we do create thee
 Earl of Gloucester, and Lord Chamberlain, 90
 Despite of times, despite of enemies.

Y. Spen. My lord, here 's a messenger from the barons
 Desires access unto your majesty.

K. Edw. Admit him near.

Enter the Herald, with his coat of arms.

Her. Long live King Edward, England's lawful lord !

K. Edw. So wish not they, I wis, that sent thee hither.
 Thou com'st from Mortimer and his 'complices,
 A ranker rout of rebels never was.
 Well, say thy message.

Her. The barons up in arms by me salute 100
 Your highness with long life and happiness ;
 And bid me say, as plainer to your grace,
 That if without effusion of blood
 You will this grief have ease and remedy,
 That from your princely person you remove
 This Spencer, as a putrifying branch,
 That deads the royal vine, whose golden leaves
 Empale your princely head, your diadem,
 Whose brightness such pernicious upstarts dim,
 Say they ; and lovingly advise your grace, 110
 To cherish virtue and nobility,

And have old servitors in high esteem,
 And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers :
 This granted, they, their honours, and their lives,
 Are to your highness vowed and consecrate.

Y. Spen. Ah, traitors ! will they still display their pride ?

K. Edw. Away, tarry no answer, but be gone !
 Rebels, will they appoint their sovereign
 His sports, his pleasures, and his company ?
 Yet, ere thou go, see how I do divorce 120

[*Embraces SPENCER.*

Spencer from me.—Now get thee to thy lords,
 And tell them I will come to chastise them
 For murdering Gaveston ; his thee, get thee gone !
 Edward with fire and sword follows at thy heels.

[*Exit Herald.*

My lords, perceive you how these rebels swell ?
 Soldiers, good hearts, defend your sovereign's right,
 For now, even now, we march to make them stoop.
 Away ! [*Exeunt.*

The Queen's mission to France fails, and in desperation she joins Mortimer and the barons who have determined to rebel. Edward flies without striking a blow, but is soon captured, and the Queen, at Mortimer's instigation, consents to sign his death-warrant.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Enter Young MORTIMER.

Y. Mor. The king must die, or Mortimer goes down ;
 The commons now begin to pity him :
 Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death
 Is sure to pay for it when his son's of age ;
 And therefore will I do it cunningly.
 This letter, written by a friend of ours,
 Contains his death, yet bids them save his life. [*Reads.*

348 DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA

'Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est,
 Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die.'
 But read it thus, and that's another sense: 10
'Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est,
 Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst.
 Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,
 That, being dead, if it chance to be found,
 Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,
 And we be quit that caused it to be done.
 Within this room is locked the messenger
 That shall convey it and perform the rest :
 And by a secret token that he bears
 Shall he be murdered when the deed is done.— 20
 Lightborn, come forth !

Enter LIGHTBORN.

Art thou so resolute as thou wast ?

Light. What else, my lord ? and far more resolute.

Y. Mor. And hast thou cast how to accomplish it ?

Light. Aye, aye, and none shall know which way he died.

Y. Mor. But at his looks, Lightborn, thou wilt relent.

Light. Relent ! ha, ha ! I use much to relent.

Y. Mor. Well, do it bravely, and be secret.

Light. You shall not need to give instructions ;
 'Tis not the first time I have killed a man. 30
 I learned in Naples how to poison flowers ;
 To strangle with a lawn thrust down the throat ;
 To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point ;
 Or whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
 And blow a little powder in his ears :
 Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
 And yet I have a braver way than these.

Y. Mor. What's that ?

Light. Nay, you shall pardon me ; none shall know my tricks.

Y. Mor. I care not how it is, so it be not spied. 40
Deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis. [*Gives letter.*

At every ten mile end thou hast a horse.

Take this ; [*Gives money*] away ! and never see me more.

Light. No !

Y. Mor. No ;

Unless thou bring me news of Edward's death.

Light. That will I quickly do. Farewell, my lord.

[*Exit.*

Y. Mor. The prince I rule, the queen do I command,
And with a lowly congé to the ground
The proudest lords salute me as I pass ; 50
I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.

Feared am I more than loved ;—let me be feared,

And when I frown, make all the court look pale.

I view the prince with Aristarchus' eyes,
Whose looks were as a breeching to a boy.

They thrust upon me the protectorship,

And sue to me for that that I desire.

While at the council-table, grave enough,

And not unlike a bashful puritan,

First I complain of imbecility, 60

Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum* ;¹

Till being interrupted by my friends,

Suscepi that *provinciam* ² as they term it ;

And to conclude, I am Protector now.

Now is all sure : the queen and Mortimer

Shall rule the realm, the king ; and none rules us.

Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance ;

And what I list command who dare control ?

¹ The heaviest of burdens.

² I have undertaken that office.

*Maior sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere.*¹

And that this be the coronation-day, 70
It pleaseth me, and Isabel the queen. [*Trumpets within.*
The trumpets sound, I must go take my place.

*Enter KING EDWARD THE THIRD, QUEEN ISABELLA, the
ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY, Champion, and Nobles.*

A. of Cant. Long live King Edward, by the grace of
God,
King of England and Lord of Ireland !

Cham. If any Christian, Heathen, Turk, or Jew,
Dare but affirm that Edward's not true king,
And will avouch his saying with the sword,
I am the champion that will combat him.

Y. Mor. None comes, sound trumpets.

[*Trumpets sound.*

K. Edw. Third. Champion, here's to thee. 80

[*Gives a purse.*

Q. Isab. Lord Mortimer, now take him to your charge.

Enter Soldiers, with KENT prisoner.

Y. Mor. What traitor have we there with blades and
bills ?

Sol. Edmund, the Earl of Kent.

K. Edw. Third. What hath he done ?

Sol. 'A would have taken the king away perforce,
As we were bringing him to Killingworth.

Y. Mor. Did you attempt his rescue, Edmund ? speak.

Kent. Mortimer, I did ; he is our king,
And thou compell'st this prince to wear the crown. 89

Y. Mor. Strike off his head ! he shall have martial law.

Kent. Strike off my head ! base traitor, I defy thee !

K. Edw. Third. My lord, he is my uncle, and shall live.

Y. Mor. My lord, he is your enemy, and shall die.

¹ I am too great for fortune to injure.

Kent. Stay, villains !

K. Edw. Third. Sweet mother, if I cannot pardon him,
Entreat my Lord Protector for his life.

Q. Isab. Son, be content ; I dare not speak a word.

K. Edw. Third. Nor I, and yet methinks I should
command ;

But, seeing I cannot, I'll entreat for him —

My lord, if you will let my uncle live, 100
I will requite it when I come to age.

Y. Mor. 'Tis for your highness' good, and for the
realm's.—

How often shall I bid you bear him hence ?

Kent. Art thou king ? must I die at thy command ?

Y. Mor. At our command.—Once more away with
him.

Kent. Let me but stay and speak ; I will not go.
Either my brother or his son is king,
And none of both them thirst for Edmund's blood :
And therefore, soldiers, whither will you hale me ?

[Soldiers hale KENT away, to be beheaded.]

K. Edw. Third. What safety may I look for at his hands,
If that my uncle shall be murdered thus ? 111

Q. Isab. Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy
foes ;

Had Edmund lived, he would have sought thy death.
Come, son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park.

K. Edw. Third. And shall my uncle Edmund ride
with us ?

Q. Isab. He is a traitor ; think not on him ; come.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE V.

Enter MATREVIS and GURNEY.

Mat. Gurney, I wonder the king dies not,
Being in a vault up to the knees in water,

To which the channels of the castle run,
 From whence a damp continually ariseth,
 That were enough to poison any man,
 Much more a king brought up so tenderly.

Gur. And so do I, Matrevis: yesternight
 I opened but the door to throw him meat,
 And I was almost stifled with the savour.

Mat. He hath a body able to endure 10
 More than we can inflict: and therefore now
 Let us assail his mind another while.

Gur. Send for him out thence, and I will anger him.

Mat. But stay, who's this.

Enter LIGHTBORN.

Light. My Lord Protector greets you. [Gives letter.

Gur. What's here? I know not how to construe it.

Mat. Gurney, it was left unpainted for the nonce;
 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere,'
 That's his meaning. 19

Light. Know ye this token? I must have the king.
[Gives token.

Mat. Aye, stay awhile, thou shalt have answer straight.
 This villain's sent to make away the king. [Aside.

Gur. I thought as much. [Aside.

Mat. And when the murder's done,
 See how he must be handled for his labour.
Pereat iste! Let him have the king. [Aside.

What else? here is the key, this is the lock,
 Do as you are commanded by my lord.

Light. I know what I must do. Get you away.
 Yet be not far off, I shall need your help; 30
 See that in the next room I have a fire,
 And get me a spit, and let it be red-hot.

Mat. Very well.

Gur. Need you anything besides ?

Light. What else ? A table and a feather-bed.

Gur. That 's all ?

Light. Aye, aye ; so, when I call you, bring it in.

Mat. Fear not thou that.

Gur. Here 's a light, to go into the dungeon.

[*Gives a light, and then exit with MATREVIS.*

Light. So now

40

Must I about this gear ; ne'er was there any

So finely handled as this king shall be.

Foh, here 's a place indeed, with all my heart !

K. Edw. Who 's there ? what light is that ? wherefore
com'st thou ?

Light. To comfort you, and bring you joyful news.

K. Edw. Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy
looks.

Villain, I know thou com'st to murder me.

Light. To murder you, my most gracious lord !

Far is it from my heart to do you harm.

The queen sent me to see how you were used,

50

For she relents at this your misery :

And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears

To see a king in this most piteous state ?

K. Edw. Weep'st thou already ? list awhile to me,

And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,

Or as Matrevis' , hewn from the Caucasus,

Yet will it melt, ere I have done my tale.

This dungeon where they keep me is the sink

Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

Light. O villains !

60

K. Edw. And there in mire and puddle have I stood

This ten days' space ; and, lest that I should sleep,

One plays continually upon a drum.

They give me bread and water, being a king ;

So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
 My mind 's distempered, and my body 's numbed,
 And whether I have limbs or no I know not.
 Oh, would my blood dropped out from every vein,
 As doth this water from my tattered robes.
 Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus
 When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
 And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont.

70

Light. Oh, speak no more, my lord! this breaks my heart.

Lie on this bed, and rest yourself awhile.

K. Edw. These looks of thine can harbour nought but death :

I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
 Yet stay ; awhile forbear thy bloody hand,
 And let me see the stroke before it comes,
 That even then when I shall lose my life
 My mind may be more steadfast on my God.

80

Light. What means your highness to mistrust me thus ?

K. Edw. What mean'st thou to dissemble with me thus ?

Light. These hands were never stained with innocent blood,

Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.

K. Edw. Forgive my thought for having such a thought.

One jewel have I left ; receive thou this. [*Giving jewel.*
 Still fear I, and I know not what 's the cause,
 But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
 Oh, if thou harbourest murder in thy heart,
 Let this gift change thy mind, and save thy soul.
 Know that I am a king : Oh, at that name
 I feel a hell of grief ! where is my crown ?
 Gone, gone ! and do I still remain alive ?

90

Light. You're overwatched, my lord ; lie down and rest.

K. Edw. But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep ;

For not these ten days have these eye-lids closed.

Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear

Open again. Oh, wherefore sitt'st thou here ?

Light. If you mistrust me, I'll begone, my lord. 99

K. Edw. No, no, for if thou mean'st to murder me,
Thou wilt return again, and therefore stay. [*Sleeps.*

Light. He sleeps.

K. Edw. [*waking*]. Oh, let me not die yet ! Oh, stay a while !

Light. How now, my lord ?

K. Edw. Something still buzzeth in mine ears,
And tells me if I sleep I never wake ;

This fear is that which makes me tremble thus.

And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come ?

Light. To rid thee of thy life.—Matrevis, come !

Enter MATREVIS and GURNEY.

K. Edw. I am too weak and feeble to resist :— 110
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul !

Light. Run for the table.

K. Edw. Oh, spare me, or dispatch me in a trice.

[*MATREVIS brings in a table.*

Light. So, lay the table down, and stamp on it,
But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body.

[*KING EDWARD is murdered.*

Mat. I fear me that this cry will raise the town,
And therefore, let us take horse and away.

Light. Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done ?

Gur. Excellent well : take this for thy reward.

[*GURNEY stabs LIGHTBORN, who dies.*

Come, let us cast the body in the moat, 120

And bear the king's to Mortimer, our lord :

Away !

[*Exeunt with the bodies.*

Prince Edward arraigns Mortimer for the murder, and sends him to execution.

ACT V. SCENE VI.

EDWARD III, QUEEN ISABELLA, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Q. Isab. As thou receivedst thy life from me,
Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer !

K. Edw. Third. This argues that you spilt my father's
blood,

Else you would not entreat for Mortimer.

Q. Isab. I spill his blood ! No.

K. Edw. Aye, madam, you : for so the rumour runs.

Q. Isab. That rumour is untrue : for loving thee
Is this report rais'd on poor Isabel.

K. Edw. I do not think her so unnatural.

Sec. Lord. My lord, I fear me it will prove too true. 10

K. Edw. Mother, you are suspected for his death,
And therefore we commit you to the Tower
Till further trial may be made thereof.
If you be guilty, though I be your son,
You shall not find me slack or pitiful.

Q. Isab. Nay, to my death ; for too long have I lived
Whereas my son thinks to abridge my days.

K. Edw. Away with her ! her words enforce these
tears,
And I shall pity her if she speak again.

Q. Isab. Shall I not mourn for my beloved lord, 20
And with the rest accompany him to his grave ?

Sec. Lord. Thus, madam, 'tis the king's will you shall
hence.

Q. Isab. He hath forgotten me : stay, I am his mother.

Sec. Lord. That boots not, therefore, gentle madam, go.

Q. Isab. Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this
grief !

[*Exit attended.*]

CHAPTER V

A COUNTERBLAST TO SHAKESPEARE

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, Lord Cobham, was born in Herefordshire about the year 1378. His youth, if we may trust a statement extorted from him under confession,¹ was wild and dissipated; but as early as 1401 he was holding office in the Welsh marches, and in 1404 he sat for his native county in Parliament. Early in the fifteenth century he became known for his Lollard opinions; but for a time he was protected from accusation by his friendship with Prince Hal, and in 1411 he was sent to France by the king on an important political embassy. The accession of Henry V brought about a sudden change in his fortunes. He was abruptly dismissed from the court, tried as a heretic before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and committed to the Tower. Shortly afterwards he escaped, but while in hiding was suspected, on imperfect evidence, of complicity in two successive plots against the king's life. He was again apprehended, tried on a foregone conclusion, and in 1417 cruelly executed as a traitor.

There can be no doubt that the conception of Falstaff—'my old lad of the castle', as Prince Hal calls him²—was taken from some burlesque and distorted version of this career. Oldcastle, like Falstaff, was brought up as a page to the Duke of Norfolk. The anonymous play of *Henry V*, which Shakespeare knew and quoted, opens with a robbery committed by the prince and his roistering companions, among whom is 'a fat knight called Sir John Oldcastle'. The populace identified the two

¹ It is given in Bale's *Life of Oldcastle*, p. 26.

² *Henry IV*, Part I, Act I. sc. 2.

characters so readily that it refused to accept Shakespeare's disclaimer,¹ and as late as 1618 was still attributing to Oldcastle one of Falstaff's most characteristic speeches.² It is not of course conceivable that Shakespeare had any intention of offending religious susceptibilities. He did not misrepresent Oldcastle as Bale had misrepresented King John, or even as Peele had misrepresented Elinor; but simply took a farcical sketch out of an extant play and without thought of portraiture turned it into the central figure of all comedy. At the same time it was natural that the identification, when once made, should have aroused a strong feeling of antagonism. The Protestant³ cause was indignant at what it held to be a travesty of its hero; and in 1600, three years after the production of *Henry IV*, a group of Henslowe's dramatists were employed to collaborate on a Historical play which should clear Oldcastle's memory and set his character in its proper light.

The play of *Sir John Oldcastle*, like that of *Henry IV*, was designed in two parts: but of these the first alone survives. We have thus no real climax: we expect to end with Lord Cobham's martyrdom, and stop half-way with his acquittal on an irrelevant charge of murder. But the torso is well wrought and well proportioned. The two conspiracies, for example, are skilfully contrasted, and full advantage is taken of the fact that they occur in the right dramatic order. The action throughout is stirring and vigorous, the style, in the more serious portions, is uniformly sustained, and the comic scenes, if

¹ Epilogue to *Henry IV*, Part II. 'For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man.' The disclaimer itself is an interesting piece of evidence.

² The speech about Honour, *Henry IV*, Part I, Act V. sc. 1. See Payne Collier, vol. iii. p. 69.

³ In *Sir John Oldcastle*, Act I. sc. 2, the name Protestant is pointedly and emphatically applied to the Lollards.

somewhat ill polished, have a good deal of humour in the conception. Critics have widely differed as to the delineation of the hero. Hazlitt thought ill of it: Dr. Ward dismisses it as the description of 'an injured innocent'¹; Schlegel, who attributed the play to Shakespeare,² considered it a model of biographical truth, and with this latter judgement we are disposed to agree. Oldcastle is not a mere victim, passive under the assaults of malice and bigotry: he is intensely and lovably human, and the trouble through which he is made to pass involves not only our compassion but our sympathy.

ANTHONY MUNDAY (1553-1633) was the son of Christopher Munday, a draper, and was born in London. He had little education, except what could be gained from two years' apprenticeship to a stationer; in 1578 he broke his articles and started for Rome, perhaps as a Protestant spy. On his return he obtained some meagre political employment, mainly against the Catholics, but soon gave up this form of public life for the stage. Between 1584 and 1602 he was concerned in some eighteen plays, of which only four now survive:—*John à Kent* and *John à Cumber* (1595 or earlier), the *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, written in 1598 and revised by Chettle next year, the *Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, written with Chettle about 1600, and the *Life of Sir John Oldcastle*, written in 1600 with Drayton, Hathway, and Wilson. He was an industrious and prolific author, who made his mark in lyric, ballad, pageant, and romance, as well as in drama.

For MICHAEL DRAYTON, see vol. i, p. 348.

RICHARD HATHWAY (fl. 1602) was probably a native of Warwickshire, and possibly a relative of Shakespeare's wife. At the end of the sixteenth century he was one of the struggling dramatists in the pay of Philip Henslowe, and is known to have had a share in some fifteen plays, of which *Sir John Oldcastle* is the only one now extant.

¹ Dr. Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. i. pp. 434-5.

² The first edition, by error or imposture, bore Shakespeare's name on the title-page.

ROBERT WILSON (1579-1610) was probably the son of Robert Wilson, actor and writer of comedies, and was born in London. Like Hathway he gained his livelihood as one of Philip Henslowe's drudges, and his reputation now rests entirely on the part which he took in the composition of *Sir John Oldcastle*.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

KING HENRY THE FIFTH.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, Lord
Cobham.

LORD HERBERT.

LORD POWIS.

DUKE OF SUFFOLK.

EARL OF HUNTINGTON.

EARL OF CAM-

BRIDGE } Conspirators
LORD SCROOPE } against the
SIR THOMAS } King.

GREY

SIR ROGER ACTON

SIR RICHARD LEE

MASTER BOURN

MASTER BEVER- } Rebels.
LEY }MURLEY, a Brewer
of Dunstable

BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

TWO JUDGES OF ASSIZE.

LORD WARDEN OF THE
CINQUE PORTS.MR. BUTLER, Gentleman of
the Privy Chamber.

CHARTRES, a French Agent.

CROMER, Sheriff of Kent.

MAYOR OF HEREFORD.

SHERIFF OF HEREFORD-
SHIRE.SIR JOHN, the Parson of
Wrotham.

LIEUTENANT OF THE TOWER.

MAYOR OF ST. ALBANS.

GAOLER OF ST. ALBANS.

A KENTISH CONSTABLE, and
an Ale-man.DICK and TOM, Servants to
Murley.

AN IRISHMAN.

HARPOOL, Servant to Lord
Cobham.GOUGH, Servant to Lord Her-
bert.OWEN and DAVY, Servants to
Lord Powis.CLUN, Sumner to the Bishop
of Rochester.

LADY COBHAM.

LADY POWIS.

DOLL.

KATE, the Carrier's Daughter.

An Host, Ostler, Carriers,
Soldiers, Beggarmen, Con-
stables, Warders of the
Tower, Bailiffs, Messengers,
and other Attendants.[Scene : *England.*]

The Duke of Suffolk and the Bishop of Rochester accuse Sir John Oldcastle of heresy. King Henry seems at first inclined to protect him, and the Bishop, at the instigation of Sir John of Wrotham, determines to send a sumner of his own to serve a process on him.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Kent. An outer Court before LORD COBHAM'S House. A Public Road leading to it ; and an Alehouse appearing at a little distance.

Enter two OLD MEN, and two SOLDIERS.

1 *Sold.* God help, God help ! there's law for punishing,
But there's no law for our necessity :
There be more stocks to set poor soldiers in
Than there be houses to relieve them at.

1 *Old M.* Aye, housekeeping decays in every place,
Even as Saint Peter writ, still worse and worse.

2 *Old M.* Master mayor of Rochester has given command that none shall go abroad out of the parish ; and has set down an order, forsooth, what every poor householder must give for our relief ; where there be some 'sessed, I may say to you, had almost as much need to beg as we. 12

1 *Old M.* It is a hard world the while.

2 *Old M.* If a poor man ask at the door for God's sake, they ask him for a licence, or a certificate from a justice.

1 *Sold.* 'Faith, we have none but what we bear upon our bodies, our maim'd limbs, God help us !

2 *Sold.* And yet, as lame as I am, I'll with the king into France, if I can but crawl a shipboard. I had rather be slain in France than starve in England. 21

1 *Old M.* Ha, were I but as lusty as I was at Shrews-

bury battle, I would not do as I do:—but we are now come to the good Lord Cobham's, the best man to the poor in all Kent.

a Old M. God bless him ! there be but few such.

Enter LORD COBHAM and HARPOOL.

Cob. Thou peevish, froward man, what wouldst thou have ?

Har. This pride, this pride, brings all to beggary.
I served your father, and your grandfather ;
Show me such two men now : no, no ! your backs, 30
Your backs, the devil and pride, has cut the throat
Of all good house-keeping ; they were the best
Yeomen's masters that ever were in England.

Cob. Yea, except thou have a crew of filthy knaves
And sturdy rogues, still feeding at my gate,
There is no hospitality with thee.

Har. They may sit at the gate well enough, but the
devil of anything you give them, except they'll eat
stones.

Cob. 'Tis long then of such hungry knaves as you : 40
Yea, Sir, here's your retinue ; your guests be come ;
They know their hours, I warrant you.

i Old M. God bless your honour ! God save the good
Lord Cobham, and all his house !

i Sold. Good your honour, bestow your blessed alms
upon poor men.

Cob. Now, Sir, here be your alms-knights : now are you
as safe as the emperor. 48

Har. My alms-knights ? Nay, they're yours : it is
a shame for you, and I'll stand to't ; your foolish alms
maintains more vagabonds than all the noblemen in Kent
beside. Out, you rogues, you knaves ; work for your
livings. Alas, poor men [*aside*], they may beg their

hearts out; there's no more charity among men than among so many mastiff dogs. What make you here, you needy knaves? Away, away, you villains.

a Sold. I beseech you, Sir, be good to us.

Cob. Nay, nay, they know thee well enough; I think That all the beggars in this land are thy

Acquaintance: go bestow your alms, none will
Control you, Sir. 60

Har. What should I give them? you are grown so beggarly that you can scarce give a bit of bread at your door. You talk of your religion so long that you have banish'd charity from you. A man may make a flax-shop in your kitchen chimneys for any fire there is stirring.

Cob. If thou wilt give them nothing, send them hence: Let them not stand here starving in the cold. 60

Har. Who! I drive them hence? If I drive poor men from the door, I'll be hang'd: I know not what I may come to myself. God help ye, poor knaves, ye see the world. Well, you had a mother; O God be with thee, good lady, thy soul's at rest! She gave more in shirts and smocks to poor children than you spend in your house; and yet you live a beggar too.

[To LORD COBHAM.]

Cob. Even the worst deed that e'er my mother did Was in relieving such a fool as thou.

Har. Aye, I am a fool still: with all your wit you'll die a beggar; go to. 80

Cob. Go, you old fool, give the poor people something. Go in, poor men, into the inner court, And take such alms as there is to be had.

Sold. God bless your honour!

Har. Hang you, rogues, hang you; there's nothing but misery amongst you; you fear no law, you.

2 *Old M.* God bless you, good master Ralph, God save your life ; you are good to the poor still.

[*Exeunt HARPOOL, OLD MEN, and SOLDIERS.*

Enter LORD POWIS disguised.

Cob. What fellow's yonder comes along the grove ?
 Few passengers there be that know this way. 90
 Methinks he stops, as though he stay'd for me,
 And meant to shroud himself among the bushes.
 I know, the clergy hates me to the death,
 And my religion gets me many foes :
 And this may be some desperate rogue, suborn'd
 To work me mischief :—as it pleaseth God.
 If he come toward me, sure I'll stay his coming,
 Be he but one man, whatsoe'er he be.

[*LORD POWIS advances.*

I have been well acquainted with that face.

Pow. Well met, my honourable lord and friend. 100

Cob. You are very welcome, Sir, whate'er you be ;
 But of this sudden, Sir, I do not know you.

Pow. I am one that wisheth well unto your honour ;
 My name is Powis, an old friend of yours.

Cob. My honourable lord, and worthy friend ;
 What makes your lordship thus alone in Kent ?
 And thus disguised in this strange attire ?

Pow. My lord, an unexpected accident
 Hath at this time enforced me to these parts,
 And thus it happ'd. Not yet full five days since, 110
 Now at the last assize at Hereford,
 It chanced that the Lord Herbert and myself,
 'Mongst other things, discoursing at the table,
 Did fall in speech about some certain points
 Of Wickliff's doctrine, 'gainst the papacy
 And the religion Catholic maintain'd

Through the most part of Europe at this day.
This wilful testy lord stuck not to say
That Wickliff was a knave, a schismatic,
His doctrine devilish, and heretical ; 120
And whatsoe'er he was maintain'd the same,
Was traitor both to God and to his country.
Being moved at his peremptory speech,
I told him some maintained those opinions,
Men, and truer subjects than Lord Herbert was :
And he replying in comparisons,
Your name was urged, my lord, against his challenge,
To be a perfect favourer of the truth.
And, to be short, from words we fell to blows,
Our servants and our tenants taking parts ;— 130
Many on both sides hurt ; and for an hour
The broil by no means could be pacified ;
Until the judges, rising from the bench,
Were in their persons forced to part the fray.

Cob. I hope no man was violently slain.

Pow. 'Faith none, I trust, but the Lord Herbert's self,
Who is in truth so dangerously hurt
As it is doubted he can hardly scape.

Cob. I am sorry, my good lord, for these ill news.

Pow. This is the cause that drives me into Kent, 140
To shroud myself with you, so good a friend,
Until I hear how things do speed at home.

Cob. Your lordship is most welcome unto Cobham ;
But I am very sorry, my good lord,
My name was brought in question in this matter,
Considering I have many enemies,
That threaten malice and do lie in wait
To take the vantage of the smallest thing.
But you are welcome, and repose your lordship,
And keep yourself here secret in my house, 150
Until we hear how the Lord Herbert speeds.

ACT II. SCENE I.—*The same.**Enter a SUMNER.*

Sum. I have the law to warrant what I do ; and though the Lord Cobham be a nobleman, that dispenses not with law. I dare serve a process, were he five noblemen. Well, this is Lord Cobham's house ; if I cannot speak with him, I'll clap my citation upon his door ; so my lord of Rochester bade me : but methinks here comes one of his men.

Enter HARPOOL.

Har. Welcome, good fellow, welcome ; whom wouldst thou speak with ?

Sum. With my Lord Cobham I would speak, if thou be one of his men. 11

Har. Yes, I am one of his men : but thou canst not speak with my lord.

Sum. May I send to him then ?

Har. I'll tell thee that when I know thy errand.

Sum. I will not tell my errand to thee.

Har. Then keep it to thyself, and walk like a knave as thou cam'st.

Sum. I tell thee, my lord keeps no knaves, sirrah.

Har. Then thou servest him not, I believe. What lord is thy master ? 21

Sum. My lord of Rochester.

Har. In good time : and what wouldst thou have with my Lord Cobham ?

Sum. I come, by virtue of a process, to cite him to appear before my lord in the court at Rochester.

Har. [*aside*]. Well, God grant me patience ! I could eat this conger. My lord is not at home ; therefore it were good, sumner, you carried your process back.

Sum. Why, if he will not be spoken withal, then will I leave it here ; and see you he take knowledge of it. 31

[*Fixes a citation on the gate.*]

Har. Zounds, you slave, do you set up your bills here ? Go to ; take it down again. Dost thou know what thou dost ? Dost thou know on whom thou servest a process ?

Sum. Yes, marry do I ; on Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham.

Har. I am glad thou knowest him yet. And sirrah, dost thou not know that the Lord Cobham is a brave lord, that keeps good beef and beer in his house, and every day feeds a hundred poor people at his gate, and keeps a hundred tall fellows ? 41

Sum. What's that to my process ?

Har. Marry, this, Sir ; is this process parchment ?

Sum. Yes, marry is it.

Har. And this seal wax ?

Sum. It is so.

Har. If this be parchment, and this wax, eat you this parchment and this wax, or I will make parchment of your skin, and beat your brains into wax. Sirrah, sumner, dispatch ; devour, sirrah, devour. 50

Sum. I am my lord of Rochester's sumner ; I come to do my office, and thou shalt answer it.

Har. Sirrah, no railing, but betake yourself to your teeth. Thou shalt eat no worse than thou bring'st with thee. Thou bring'st it for my lord, and wilt thou bring my lord worse than thou wilt eat thyself ?

Sum. Sir, I brought it not my lord to eat.

Har. Oh, do you *Sir* me now ? All's one for that ; I'll make you eat it for bringing it.

Sum. I cannot eat it. 60

Har. Can you not ? 'sblood I'll beat you till you have a stomach. [*Beats him.*]

Sum. Oh, hold, hold, good master servingman ; I will eat it.

Har. Be champing, be chewing, Sir, or I'll chew you, you rogue. Tough wax is the purest honey.

Sum. The purest honey !—O Lord, Sir ! Oh ! oh !

[*Eats.*

Har. Feed, feed ; 'tis wholesome, rogue, wholesome. Cannot you, like an honest sumner, walk with the devil your brother, to fetch in your bailiff's rents, but you must come to a nobleman's house with process ? If thy seal were as broad as the lead that covers Rochester church, thou shouldst eat it.

73

Sum. Oh, I am almost choked, I am almost choked.

Har. Who's within there ? will you shame my lord ? is there no beer in the house ? Butler, I say.

Enter BUTLER.

But. Here, here.

Har. Give him beer. There ; tough old sheep-skin's but dry meat.

[*The SUMNER drinks.*

Sum. O Sir, let me go no further ; I'll eat my word.

Har. Yea, marry, Sir, I mean you shall eat more than your own word ; for I'll make you eat all the words in the process. I'll cite you.—A cup of sack for the sumner.

But. Here, Sir, here.

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Har. Here, slave, I drink to thee.

Sum. I thank you, Sir.

Har. Now, if thou find'st thy stomach well, because thou shalt see my lord keeps meat in his house, if thou wilt go in, thou shalt have a piece of beef to thy breakfast.

Sum. No, I am very well, good master servingman, I thank you ; very well, Sir.

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Har. I am glad on't: then be walking towards Rochester to keep your stomach warm.

Sum. God be wi' you, master servingman.

[*Exit SUMNER.*]

Har. Farewell, sumner.

Sir Roger Acton, Bourn, Beverley, and Murley, leaders among the Lollards, conspire against the King. There is a false report that Cobham is supporting them.

ACT II. SCENE III.

An Audience-chamber in the Palace at Eltham.

Enter KING HENRY, the DUKE OF SUFFOLK, BUTLER, and LORD COBHAM. He kneels to the King.

K. Henry. 'Tis not enough, Lord Cobham, to submit ;
You must forsake your gross opinion.
The bishops find themselves much injured ;
And though, for some good service you have done,
We for our part are pleased to pardon you,
Yet they will not so soon be satisfied.

Cob. My gracious lord, unto your majesty,
Next unto my God, I do owe my life ;
And what is mine, either by nature's gift,
Or fortune's bounty, all is at your service. 10
But for obedience to the pope of Rome,
I owe him none ; nor shall his shaveling priests
That are in England alter my belief.
If out of Holy Scripture they can prove
That I am in an error, I will yield,
And gladly take instruction at their hands :
But otherwise, I do beseech your grace
My conscience may not be encroach'd upon.

K. Henry. We would be loath to press our subjects'
bodies,
Much less their souls, the dear redeemed part 20
Of Him that is the ruler of us all :
Yet let me counsel you, that might command.

Do not presume to tempt them with ill words,
Nor suffer any meetings to be had
Within your house, but to the uttermost
Disperse the flocks of this new gathering sect.

Cob. My liege, if any breathe, that dares come forth,
And say my life in any of these points
Deserves the attainder of ignoble thoughts,
Here stand I, craving no remorse at all, 30
But even the utmost rigour may be shown.

K. Henry. Let it suffice we know your loyalty.
What have you there ?

Cob. A deed of clemency ;
Your highness' pardon for Lord Powis' life,
Which I did beg, and you, my noble lord,
Of gracious favour did vouchsafe to grant.

K. Henry. But yet it is not signed with our hand.

Cob. Not yet, my liege.

K. Henry. The fact you say was done 40
Not of pretended malice, but by chance.

Cob. Upon mine honour so, no otherwise.

K. Henry. There is his pardon ; bid him make amends,
[Signs the pardon.

And cleanse his soul to God for his offence :
What we remit is but the body's scourge.
How now, lord bishop ?

Enter BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

Roch. Justice, dread sovereign :
As thou art king, so grant I may have justice.

K. Henry. What means this exclamation ? let us know.

Roch. Ah, my good lord, the state is much abused, 50
And our decrees most shamefully profaned.

K. Henry. How ? or by whom ?

Roch. Even by this heretic,

This Jew, this traitor to your majesty.

Cob. Prelate, thou liest, even in thy greasy maw,
Or whosoever twits me with the name
Of either traitor or of heretic.

K. Henry. Forbear, I say: and bishop, show the cause
From whence this late abuse hath been derived.

Roch. Thus, mighty king. By general consent 60
A messenger was sent to cite this lord
To make appearance in the consistory;
And coming to his house, a ruffian slave,
One of his daily followers, met the man;
Who, knowing him to be a 'paritor,
Assaults him first, and after, in contempt
Of us and our proceedings, makes him eat
The written process, parchment, seal and all;
Whereby his master neither was brought forth,
Nor we but scorn'd for our authority. 70

K. Henry. When was this done?

Roch. At six o'clock this morning.

K. Henry. And when came you to court?

Cob. Last night, my liege.

K. Henry. By this it seems he is not guilty of it,
And you have done him wrong to accuse him so.

Roch. But it was done, my lord, by his appointment;
Or else his man durst not have been so bold.

K. Henry. Or else you durst not be bold to interrupt
And fill our ears with frivolous complaints. 80
Is this the duty you do bear to us?

Was't not sufficient we did pass our word
To send for him, but you, misdoubting it,
Or, which is worse, intending to forestall
Our regal power, must likewise summon him?
This savours of ambition, not of zeal;
And rather proves you malice his estate,

Than any way that he offends the law,
 Go to, we like it not ; and he your officer
 Had his desert for being insolent, 90
 That was employ'd so much amiss herein.
 So, Cobham, when you please, you may depart.
Cob. I humbly bid farewell unto my liege.

[*Exit COBHAM.*

Enter HUNTINGTON.

K. Henry. Farewell. What is the news by Huntington ?

Hun. Sir Roger Acton, and a crew, my lord,
 Of bold seditious rebels, are in arms,
 Intending reformation of religion,
 And with their army they intend to pitch
 In Ficket-field, unless they be repulsed. 99

K. Henry. So near our presence ? Dare they be so bold ?
 And will proud war and eager thirst of blood,
 Whom we had thought to entertain far off,
 Press forth upon us in our native bounds ?
 Must we be forced to handsel our sharp blades
 In England here, which we prepared for France ?
 Well, in God's name be it. What's their number, say,
 Or who's the chief commander of this rout ?

Hun. Their number is not known as yet, my lord ;
 But, 'tis reported, Sir John Oldcastle
 Is the chief man on whom they do depend. 110

K. Henry. How ! the Lord Cobham ?

Hun. Yes, my gracious lord.

Roch. I could have told your majesty as much
 Before he went, but that I saw your grace
 Was too much blinded by his flattery.

Suf. Send post, my lord, to fetch him back again.

But. Traitor unto his country, how he smooth'd,
 And seem'd as innocent as truth itself !

K. Henry. I cannot think it yet he would be false ;

But if he be, no matter ;—let him go ; 120
We'll meet both him and them unto their woe.

[*Exeunt KING HENRY, SUFFOLK, HUNTINGTON, and BUTLER.*]

Roch. This falls out well ; and at the last I hope
To see this heretic die in a rope. [*Exit.*]

The Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroope, Sir Thomas Grey, and Chartres conspire against the king, and try to persuade Cobham to join them. Cobham, after some remonstrance, pretends complicity in order to reveal the plot to the King.

Sir Roger Acton and his associates are defeated and hanged. Cobham is taken by the Bishop of Rochester and sent to the Tower, but manages to escape.

ACT V. SCENE II.—*A High Road near St. Albans.*

Enter an IRISHMAN with his dead Master. He lays him down, and rifles him.

Irishm. Alas, poe master, Sir Richard Lee ; be Saint Patrick, Ise rob and cut thy trote, for dy shain, and dy mony, and dy gold ring. Be me truly, Ise love dee well, but now dow be kill, dow be shotten knave.

[*Enter SIR JOHN and DOLL.*]

S. John. Stand, sirrah ; what art thou ?

Irishm. Be Saint Patrick, mester, Ise poor Irisman ; Ise a leufter¹.

S. John. Sirrah, sirrah, you're a rogue ; you have killed a man here, and rifled him of all that he has. 'Sblood, you rogue, deliver, or I'll not leave you so much as a hair above your shoulders, you Irish dog. [*Robs him.*]

Irishm. We's me ! by Saint Patrick, Ise kill my mester for his shain and his ring ; and now Ise be rob of all. Me's undo. 14

¹ Perhaps the same as leuterer, 'a tramp.'

S. John. Avaunt, you rascal: go sirrah, be walking.
Come, Doll, the devil laughs when one thief robs another.
Come, wench, we'll to St. Albans.

Doll. Oh, thou art old Sir John, when all's done, i' faith.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE IV.—*St. Albans. A room in the Carrier's Inn.*

Enter Host, LORD COBHAM, and HARPOOL.

Host. Sir, you're welcome to this house, to such as is here, with all my heart; but I fear your lodging will be the worst. I have but two beds, and they are both in a chamber; and the carrier and his daughter lies in the one, and you and your wife must lie in the other.

Cob. 'Faith, Sir, for myself I do not greatly pass:
My wife is weary, and would be at rest,
For we have travell'd very far to-day;
We must be content with such as you have.

Host. But I cannot tell what to do with your man. 10

Har. What? hast thou never an empty room in thy house for me?

Host. Not a bed, in troth. There came a poor Irishman, and I lodged him in the barn, where he has fair straw, although he have nothing else.

Har. Well, mine host, I prythee help me to a pair of clean sheets, and I'll go lodge with him.

Host. By the mass, that thou shalt, a good pair of hempen sheets were ne'er lain in: come. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE V.—*The same. A Street.*

Enter MAYOR, CONSTABLE, and WATCH.

Mayor. What? have you search'd the town?

Con. All the town, Sir; we have not left a house unsearch'd that uses to lodge.

Mayor. Surely, my lord of Rochester was then deceived,
Or ill-inform'd of Sir John Oldcastle ;
Or if he came this way, he 's past the town :
He could not else have scaped you in the search.

Con. The privy watch hath been abroad all night ;
And not a stranger lodgeth in the town
But he is known ; only a lusty priest 10
We found in bed out yonder at the Shears :
But we hath charged the host with his forthcoming
To-morrow morning.

Mayor. What think you best to do ?

Con. 'Faith, master mayor, here's a few straggling
houses beyond the bridge, and a little inn where car-
riers used to lodge ; although I think surely he would
ne'er lodge there : but we'll go search, and the rather
because there came notice to the town the last night of
an Irishman, that had done a murther, whom we are
to make search for. 21

Mayor. Come then, I pray you, and be circumspect.

[*Exeunt* MAYOR, CONSTABLE, &c.]

ACT V. SCENE VI.—*The same. Before the Carrier's Inn.*

Enter WATCH.

1 *Watch.* First beset the house, before you begin to
search.

2 *Watch.* Content ; every man take a several place.

[*A noise within.*]

Keep, keep, strike him down there, down with him.

ACT V. SCENE VII.—*The same. The Yard of the Inn.*

Enter LORD COBHAM in his night-gown.

Cob. Harpool, Harpool, I hear a marvellous noise
About the house. God warrant us, I fear
We are pursued. What, Harpool ?

Har. [*from the barn*]. Who calls there?

Cob. 'Tis I; dost thou not hear a noise about the house?

Har. [*from the barn*]. Yes, marry, do I. Zounds, I cannot find

My hose. This Irish rascal, that lodged with me
All night, hath stolen my apparel, and
Has left me nothing but a lousy mantle
And a pair of brogues. Get up, get up, and, if 10
The carrier and his wench be yet asleep,
Change you with him, as he hath done with me,
And see if we can scape. [*Exit LORD COBHAM.*

ACT V. SCENE VIII.—*The same.*

A noise about the house for some time. Then enter HARPOOL in the Irishman's apparel; the MAYOR, CONSTABLE, and WATCH of St. Albans meeting him.

Con. Stand close, here comes the Irishman that did the murder; by all tokens this is he.

Mayor. And perceiving the house beset, would get away. Stand, sirrah.

Har. What art thou that bidd'st me stand?

Con. I am the officer; and am come to search for an Irishman, such a villain as thyself; thou hast murdered a man this last night by the high way.

Har. 'Sblood, constable, art thou mad? am I an Irishman?

Mayor. Sirrah, we'll find you an Irishman before we part; 10
Lay hold upon him.

Con. Make him fast. Oh, thou bloody rogue!

Enter LORD and LADY COBHAM, in the apparel of the Carrier and his daughter.

Cob. What, will these ostlers sleep all day? Good

morrow, good morrow. Come wench, come. Saddle, saddle; now afore God two fair days, ha?

Con. Who goes there?

Mayor. Oh, 'tis Lancashire carrier; let them pass.

Cob. What, will nobody ope the gates here?
Come, let's in to stable, to look to our capuls¹.

[*Exeunt* LORD and LADY COBHAM.]

Car. [*within*]. Host. Why, ostler? Ostler, ostler. 20

Enter OSTLER.

Ostl. Who calls there? what would you have?

Car. [*within*]. Zooks, do you rob your guests?
Do you lodge rogues, and slaves, and scoundrels, ha?
They ha' stolen our clothes here. Why, ostler.

Ostl. A murrain choke you; what a bawling you keep!

Enter HOST.

Host. How now? what would the carrier have?
Look up there.

Ostl. They say that the man and woman that lay by them have stolen their clothes.

Host. What, are the strange folks up, that came in yesternight? 30

Con. What, mine host, up so early?

Host. What, master mayor, and master constable?

Mayor. We are come to seek for some suspected persons.
And such as here we found have apprehended.

Enter CARRIER and KATE, in LORD and LADY COBHAM'S clothes.

Con. Who comes here?

Car. Who comes here? a plague 'found 'em. 'You bawl,' quoth-a; ods heart, I'll forswear your house;

¹ From the Latin *caballus*, French *cheval*.

you lodged a fellow and his wife by us, that ha' run away with our 'parel, and left us such gew-gaws here:—Come, Kate, come to me; thou's dizeard¹ i' faith. 40

Mayor. Mine host, know you this man?

Host. Yes, master mayor, I'll give my word for him. Why, neighbour Club, how comes this gear about?

Kate. Now, a foul on't, I cannot make this gew-gaw stand on my head.

Mayor. How came this man and woman thus attired?

Host. Here came a man and woman hither this last night,

Which I did take for substantial people,
And lodged all in one chamber by these folks;
Methinks they have been so bold to change apparel, 50
And gone away this morning ere they rose.

Mayor. That was that traitor Oldcastle that thus
Escaped us. Make hue and cry yet after him;
Keep fast that traitorous rebel his servant there:
Farewell, mine host. [Exit MAYOR.

Car. Come, Kate Owdham, thou and I's trimly dizard.

Kate. I' faith, Gaff Club, Ise wot ne'er what to do,
Ise be so flouted and so shouted at; but, by the Mass,
Ise cry.

[*Exeunt* CARRIER and his DAUGHTER, HOST, HARPOOL,
CONSTABLES, &c.

ACT V. SCENE IX.

Lord and Lady Cobham escape to a wood, and fall asleep there.

Enter SIR RICHARD LEE, and his Servants.

S. Rich. A murder closely done? and in my ground?
Search carefully; if anywhere it were,
This obscure thicket is the likeliest place.

[*Exit a Servant.*

¹ Dressed, cf. 'bedizened.'

Re-enter SERVANT, bearing a dead Body.

Ser. Sir, I have found the body stiff with cold,
And mangled cruelly with many wounds.

S. Rich. Look, if thou know'st him ; turn his body up.
Alack, it is my son, my son and heir,
Whom two years since I sent to Ireland,
To practise there the discipline of war ;
And coming home (for so he wrote to me), 10
Some savage heart, some bloody devilish hand,
Either in hate, or thirsting for his coin,
Hath here sluiced out his blood. Unhappy hour !
Accursed place ! but most inconstant fate,
That had'st reserved him from the bullet's fire,
And suffer'd him to scape the wood-kerns' fury,
Didst here ordain the treasure of his life,
Even here within the arms of tender peace,
To be consumed by treason's wasteful hand !
And, which is most afflicting to my soul, 20
That this his death and murder should be wrought
Without the knowledge by whose means 'twas done.

2 Ser. Not so, Sir ; I have found the authors of it.
See where they sit ; and in their bloody fists
The fatal instruments of death and sin.

S. Rich. Just judgement of that power, whose gracious eye,
Loathing the sight of such a heinous fact,
Dazzled their senses with benumbing sleep,
Till their unhallow'd treachery was known.
Awake, ye monsters, murderers, awake ; 30
Tremble for horror ; blush, you cannot choose,
Beholding this unhuman deed of yours.

Cob. What mean you, Sir, to trouble weary souls,
And interrupt us of our quiet sleep ?

S. Rich. O devilish ! can you boast unto yourselves
Of quiet sleep, having within your hearts

The guilt of murder waking, that with cries
Deafs the loud thunder, and solicits heaven
With more than mandrakes' shrieks for your offence?

L. Cob. What murder? You upbraid us wrongfully.

S. Rich. Can you deny the fact? see you not here 41
The body of my son, by you misdome?

Look on his wounds, look on his purple hue:
Do we not find you where the deed was done?
Were not your knives fast closed in your hands?
Is not this cloth an argument beside,
Thus stain'd and spotted with his innocent blood?
These speaking characters, were there nothing else
To plead against you, would convict you both.
To Hertford with them, where the 'sides now 50
Are kept; their lives shall answer for my son's
Lost life.

Cob. As we are innocent, so may we speed.

S. Rich. As I am wrong'd, so may the law proceed.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE X.—*St. Albans.*

*Enter the BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, CONSTABLE of St. Albans,
with SIR JOHN and DOLL, and the IRISHMAN in HARPOOL's
apparel.*

Roch. What intricate confusion have we here?
Not two hours since we apprehended one
In habit Irish, but in speech not so;
And now you bring another, that in speech
Is Irish, but in habit English: yea,
And more than so, the servant of that heretic
Lord Cobham.

Irishm. Fait, me be no servant of de Lort Cobham! me
be Mack-Shane, of Ulster.

Roch. Otherwise call'd Harpool, of Kent; go to, Sir, 10
You cannot blind us with your broken Irish.

S. John. Trust me, lord bishop, whether Irish or English,

Harpool or not Harpool, that I leave to the trial:

But sure I am this man, by face and speech,

Is he that murder'd young Sir Richard Lee

(I met him presently upon the fact);

And that he slew his master for that gold,

Those jewels, and that chain, I took from him.

Roch. Well, our affairs do call us back to London,

So that we cannot prosecute the cause,

20

As we desire to do; therefore we leave

The charge with you, to see they be convey'd

[*To the Constable.*

To Hertford 'sizes: both this counterfeit,

And you, Sir John of Wrotham,

For you are culpable as well as they.

Though not for murder, yet for felony.

But since you are the means to bring to light

This graceless murder, you shall bear with you

Our letters to the judges of the bench,

To be your friends in what they lawful may.

30

S. John. I thank your lordship.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE XI.—*Hertford. A Hall of Justice.*

Enter GAOLER and his Servant, bringing forth LORD COBHAM in irons. The JUDGE of Assize, and JUSTICES; the MAYOR of St. Albans, LORD and LADY POWIS, and SIR RICHARD LEE. The JUDGE and JUSTICES take their places on the Bench.

Judge. Now, master Mayor, what gentleman is that You bring with you before us to the bench?

Mayor. The Lord Powis, an if it like your honour, And this his lady travelling towards Wales, Who, for they lodged last night within my house,

And my lord bishop did lay wait for such,
 Were very willing to come on with me,
 Lest, for their sakes, suspicion we might wrong.

Judge. We cry your honour mercy; good my lord,
 Will't please you take your place. Madam, your ladyship
 May here, or where you will, repose yourself, 11
 Until this business now in hand be past.

L. Pow. I will withdraw into some other room,
 So that your lordship and the rest be pleased.

Judge. With all our hearts: attend the lady there.

Pow. Wife, I have eyed yon prisoners all this while,
 And my conceit doth tell me, 'tis our friend
 The noble Cobham, and his virtuous lady. [*Aside.*

L. Pow. I think no less: are they suspected for this
 murder?

Pow. What it means 20

I cannot tell, but we shall know anon.
 Meantime, as you pass by them, ask the question;
 But do it secretly, that you be not seen,
 And make some sign, that I may know your mind.

[*She passes over the stage by them.*

L. Pow. My Lord Cobham! Madam!

Cob. No Cobham now, nor madam, as you love us;
 But John of Lancashire, and Joan his wife.

L. Pow. O tell, what is it that our love can do
 To pleasure you, for we are bound to you?

Cob. Nothing but this, that you conceal our names; 30
 So, gentle lady, pass; for being spied——

L. Pow. My heart I leave, to bear part of your grief.
 [*Exit LADY POWIS.*

Judge. Call the prisoners to the bar. Sir Richard Lee,
 What evidence can you bring against these people,
 To prove them guilty of the murder done?

S. Rich. This bloody towel, and these naked knives:

Beside, we found them sitting by the place
Where the dead body lay within a bush.

Judge. What answer you, why law should not proceed,
According to this evidence given in, 40
To tax you with the penalty of death ?

Cob. That we are free from murder's very thought,
And know not how the gentleman was slain.

1 *Just.* How came this linen cloth so bloody then ?

L. Cob. My husband, hot with travelling, my lord,
His nose gush'd out a bleeding : that was it.

2 *Just.* But how came your sharp-edged knives un-
sheath'd ?

L. Cob. To cut such simple victual as we had.

Judge. Say we admit this answer to those articles,
What made you in so private a dark nook, 50
So far remote from any common path,
As was the thick where the dead corpse was thrown ?

Cob. Journeying, my lord, from London, from the term,
Down into Lancashire, where we do dwell,
And what with age and travel being faint,
We gladly sought a place where we might rest,
Free from resort of other passengers ;
And so we stray'd into that secret corner.

Judge. These are but ambages¹ to drive off time,
And linger justice from her purposed end. 60

Enter CONSTABLE, *with the* IRISHMAN, SIR JOHN, *and* DOLL.
But who are these ?

Con. Stay judgement, and release those innocents ;
For here is he whose hand hath done the deed
For which they stand indicted at the bar ;
This savage villain, this rude Irish slave :
His tongue already hath confess'd the fact,

¹ Subterfuges.

And here is witness to confirm as much.

S. John. Yes, my good lord ; no sooner had he slain
His loving master for the wealth he had,
But I upon the instant met with him : 70
And what he purchased with the loss of blood,
With strokes I presently bereaved him of :
Some of the which is spent ; the rest remaining
I willingly surrender to the hands
Of old Sir Richard Lee, as being his :
Beside, my lord judge, I do greet your honour
With letters from my lord of Rochester.

[*Delivers a letter.*

S. Rich. Is this the wolf whose thirsty throat did drink
My dear son's blood ? art thou the cursed snake
He cherish'd, yet with envious piercing sting 80
Assail'dst him mortally ? Wer't not that the law
Stands ready to revenge thy cruelty,
Traitor to God, thy master, and to me,
These hands should be thy executioner.

Judge. Patience, Sir Richard Lee, you shall have
justice.

The fact is odious ; therefore take him hence,
And being hang'd until the wretch be dead,
His body after shall be hang'd in chains,
Near to the place where he did act the murder.

Irishm. Prethee lord shudge, let me have mine own
clothes, my strouces¹ there ; and let me be hang'd in
a wyth after my country, the Irish fashion. 92

Judge. Go to ; away with him. And now, Sir John,
[*Excunt GAOLER and IRISHMAN.*

Although by you this murder came to light,
Yet upright law will not hold you excused,
For you did rob the Irishman ; by which

Trousera.

You stand attainted here of felony.

S. John. Oh, but, my lord, Sir John repents, and he will mend.

Judge. In hope thereof, together with the favour
My lord of Rochester entreats for you, 100
We are contented that you shall be proved.

S. John. I thank your lordship.

Judge. These other, falsely here
Accused, and brought in peril wrongfully,
We in like sort do set at liberty.

S. Rich. And for amends,
Touching the wrong unwittingly I have done,
I give these few crowns.

Judge. Your kindness merits praise, Sir Richard Lee :
So let us hence. [*Exeunt all except POWIS and COBHAM.*]

Pow. But Powis still must stay. 111
There yet remains a part of that true love
He owes his noble friend, unsatisfied
And unperform'd ; which first of all doth bind me
To gratulate your lordship's safe delivery ;
And then entreat, that since unlook'd-for thus
We here are met, your honour would vouchsafe
To ride with me to Wales, where, to my power,
Though not to quittance those great benefits
I have received of you, yet both my house, 120
My purse, my servants, and what else I have,
Are all at your command. Deny me not :
I know the bishop's hate pursues you so,
As there's no safety in abiding here.

Cob. 'Tis true, my lord, and God forgive him for it.

Pow. Then let us hence. You shall be straight provided
Of lusty geldings : and once enter'd Wales,
Well may the bishop hunt ; but, spite his face,
He never more shall have the game in chase. [*Exeunt.*]

CHAPTER VI

AN AFTERPIECE

It usually happens that the end of an artistic period is marked by a decadence of invention. Sometimes it becomes erudite, like the Alexandrine poets; sometimes it grows rhetorical and magniloquent, like the age of the Caracci; not infrequently, like some recent developments of modern music, it wastes its substance on riotous living. Traces of this tendency may be observed at the close of the Elizabethan drama. In the later plays of Webster and Fletcher, for example, the invention is beginning to lose touch with great ideas: its comedy overpasses the reticences of good taste; its tragedy, instead of ennobling, only frightens and repels. The desire of beauty no longer animates the play as a whole, but is concentrated on single passages or episodes; the workmanship is unequal and often careless; the appeals to pity and terror, because isolated, are forced with undue emphasis and insistence. Under this censure the romantic tragedies of John Ford must be allowed to fall. They are often admirable in point of technical skill; they often glow with a sombre and lurid passion; but they choose what Hazlitt called 'unfair subjects', and in presenting these they are often unscrupulous as to the means that they employ.¹ It is therefore the more interesting to find, at the extreme close of our period, a historical drama which is not unworthy of its best days: which is great in conception and dignified in treatment, which has true humour and true pathos,

¹ See, for example, the scene of Ithocles' murder in the *Broken Heart*.

which draws its characters with a firm hand and places them upon the canvas with an unerring mastery. The glow, which was dying out, revives once more into pure flame, and for a moment lights up a fading art with something of its old splendour.

In the preface to *Perkin Warbeck* Ford apologizes for adopting a dramatic form which had long grown unfashionable. For twenty years no play of any importance had taken a subject from English history: and the popular taste, full fed on broad comedy and romantic sensationalism, required some coaxing before it would accept this simple fare. From any such unworthy appeal the action is wholly free, but it shows its date by the spirit of romance which is almost unconsciously present throughout. The interest is personal rather than political; the rebellion seems to us a small matter beside the fortunes of Warbeck and of Lady Katherine Gordon, and the most unsympathetic figure is the victorious king. The two principal characters are admirably delineated: Warbeck is as gay and captivating as Prince Charlie, Lady Katherine is the very embodiment of sweet and devoted womanhood; and round them is grouped a whole company of living people: Huntley bluff and honest, James as majestic in presence as he is fickle in policy, the sorry conspirators Heron and Astley, Frion the diplomatic and John-a-Water the cautious. The tone of the play is full of a certain chivalry and courtliness; the tragic issue is maintained at its highest level: the comedy is frank and clean, hovering on the edge of burlesque, but never descending to farce or buffoonery. When we remember Ford's previous work, when we realize the surroundings among which he wrought, we can only the more regret that he never repeated the experiment through which his genius found its noblest opportunity of utterance.

JOHN FORD (1586-?1640) was born at Ilington in Devonshire, and educated at Exeter College, Oxford. On leaving the University, in 1602, he entered at the Middle Temple, and began his literary career in 1606 with an *Elegy* on the Earl of Devonshire. His first known play, a comedy entitled *An Ill Beginning has a Good End*, was acted at the Cockpit in 1613, and from thenceforward till 1639 he maintained an intermittent connexion with the theatre. The *Lovers' Melancholy* was acted at the Blackfriars in 1629; in 1633 appeared his two most famous tragedies, *Love's Sacrifice* and *The Broken Heart*, in 1634 followed *The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck*, in 1638 a comedy called *The Ladies' Trial*. Beside the works which he wrote single-handed he collaborated with Dekker, Rowley, and Webster: with the first of whom he wrote, about 1621, that remarkable tragi-comedy *The Witch of Edmonton*. Of his later years nothing is known, though we have some tradition that about 1639 he retired to Devonshire, with a competency gained by his professional practice, and there ended his days.

PERKIN WARBECK

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

HENRY VII.
 LORD DAWBENEY.
 SIR WILLIAM STANLEY, Lord
 Chamberlain.
 EARL OF OXFORD.
 EARL OF SURREY.
 FOX, Bishop of Durham.
 URSWICK, Chaplain to the
 King.
 SIR ROBERT CLIFFORD.
 LAMBERT SIMNEL.
 HIALAS, a Spanish Agent.
 JAMES IV, King of Scotland.
 EARL OF HUNTLEY.
 EARL OF CRAWFORD.
 LORD DALYELL.

MARCHMONT, a Herald.
 PERKIN WARBECK.
 STEPHEN FRION, his Secre-
 tary.
 JOHN-A-WATER, Mayor of
 Cork.
 HERON, a Mercer.
 SKELTON, a Tailor.
 ASTLEY, a Scrivener.
 Sheriff, Constable, Officers,
 Messenger, Guards, Soldiers,
 Masquers, and Attendants.
 LADY KATHERINE GORDON.
 COUNTESS OF CRAWFORD.
 JANE DOUGLAS, Lady Kath-
 erine's attendant.

Scene : Partly in England, partly in Scotland.

Perkin Warbeck, instigated by the Duchess of Burgundy, claims the English throne. He lands in Ireland, where he is at once supported by Stephen Frion, late French Secretary to King Henry VII, John-à-Water, sometime Mayor of Cork, and a few rebel leaders of low degree, such as Heron, Skelton, Astley, and others. Later he is joined by Sir William Stanley, the Lord Chamberlain, and by several English nobles and ecclesiastics; while the Cornish take the opportunity to rise in revolt. Warbeck goes to Scotland, and is kindly received by King James, who accepts his pretensions and proposes that he should marry Lady Katherine Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Huntley.

ACT II. SCENE III.—*Edinburgh. An Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter EARL OF CRAWFORD and LORD DALYELL.

Craw. 'Tis more than strange; my reason cannot answer

Such argument of fine imposture, couched
In witchcraft of persuasion, that it fashions
Impossibilities, as if appearance
Could cozen truth itself: this dukeling mushroom
Hath doubtless charmed the king.

Dal. He courts the ladies,
As if his strength of language chained attention
By power of prerogative.

Craw. It maddened
My very soul to hear our master's motion:
What surety both of amity and honour 10
Must of necessity ensue upon
A match betwixt some noble of our nation
And this brave prince, forsooth!

Dal. 'Twill prove too fatal;
Wise Huntley fears the threatening. Bless the lady
From such a ruin!

Craw. How the counsel privy
Of this young Phaethon do screw their faces
Into a gravity their trades, good people,
Were never guilty of! the meanest of 'em
Dreams of at least an office in the state.

Dal. Sure, not the hangman's; 'tis bespoke already 20
For service to their rogueships—Silence!

Enter KING JAMES and EARL OF HUNTLEY.

K. Ja. Do not
Argue against our will; we have descended
Somewhat—as we may term it—too familiarly
From justice of our birthright, to examine
The force of your allegiance,—sir, we have,—
But find it short of duty.

Hunt. Break my heart,
Do, do, king! Have my services, my loyalty,—
Heaven knows untainted ever,—drawn upon me
Contempt now in mine age, when I but wanted
A minute of a peace not to be troubled, 30
My last, my long one? Let me be a dotard,
A bedlam, a poor sot, or what you please
To have me, so you will not stain your blood,
Your own blood, royal sir, though mixed with mine,
By marriage of this girl to a straggler:
Take, take my head, sir; whilst my tongue can wag,
It cannot name him other.

K. Ja. Kings are counterfeits
In your repute, grave oracle, not presently
Set on their thrones with sceptres in their fists.
But use your own detraction; 'tis our pleasure 40
To give our cousin York for wife our kinswoman,
The Lady Katherine: instinct of sovereignty
Designs the honour, though her peevish father
Usurps our resolution.

Hunt. Oh, 'tis well,
Exceeding well ! I never was ambitious
Of using congees ¹ to my daughter-queen—
A queen ! perhaps a quean !—Forgive me, Dalyell,
Thou honourable gentleman ;—none here
Dare speak one word of comfort ?

Dal. Cruel misery ! 49

Craw. The lady, gracious prince, maybe hath settled
Affection on some former choice.

Dal. Enforcement
Would prove but tyranny.

Hunt. I thank ye heartily.
Let any yeoman of our nation challenge
An interest in the girl, then the king
May add a jointure of ascent in titles,
Worthy a free consent ; now he pulls down
What old desert hath builded.

K. Ja. Cease persuasions.
I violate no pawns of faith, intrude not
On private loves : that I have played the orator
For kingly York to virtuous Kate, her grant 60
Can justify, referring her contents
To our provision. The Welsh Harry henceforth
Shall therefore know, and tremble to acknowledge,
That not the painted idol of his policy
Shall fright the lawful owner from a kingdom.
We are resolved.

Hunt. Some of thy subjects' hearts,
King James, will bleed for this.

K. Ja. Then shall their bloods
Be nobly spent. No more disputes ; he is not
Our friend who contradicts us.

Hunt. Farewell, daughter !

¹ Paying reverence.

My care by one is lessened, thank the king for 't: 70
I and my griefs will dance now.

*Enter PERKIN WARBECK, leading, and complimenting with,
LADY KATHERINE; COUNTESS OF CRAWFORD, JANE
DOUGLAS, FRION, JOHN-A-WATER, ASTLEY, HERON,
and SKELTON.*

Look, lords, look ;

Here's hand in hand already !

K. Ja. Peace, old frenzy !—

How like a king he looks ! Lords, but observe
The confidence of his aspect ; dross cannot
Cleave to so pure a metal—royal youth !
Plantagenet undoubted !

Hunt. [Aside.] Ho, brave !—Youth,
But no Plantagenet, by'r lady, yet,
By red rose or by white.

War. An union this way

Settles possession in a monarchy
Established rightly, as is my inheritance : 80
Acknowledge me but sovereign of this kingdom,
Your heart, fair princess, and the hand of providence
Shall crown you queen of me and my best fortunes.

Kath. Where my obedience is, my lord, a duty
Love owes true service.

War. Shall I ?—

K. Ja. Cousin, yes,
Enjoy her ; from my hand accept your bride ;
[He joins their hands.]

And may they live at enmity with comfort
Who grieve at such an equal pledge of troths !
You are the prince's wife now.

Kath. By your gift, sir.

War. Thus I take seizure of mine own.

Kath. I miss yet 90
A father's blessing. Let me find it ;—humbly
Upon my knees I seek it.

Hunt. I am Huntley,
Old Alexander Gordon, a plain subject,
Nor more nor less ; and, lady, if you wish for
A blessing, you must bend your knees to Heaven ;
For Heaven did give me you. Alas, alas,
What would you have me say ? May all the happiness
My prayers ever sued to fall upon you
Preserve you in your virtues !—Prithee, Dalyell,
Come with me ; for I feel thy griefs as full 100
As mine ; let's steal away, and cry together.

Dal. My hopes are in their ruins.

[*Exeunt* EARL OF HUNTLEY and LORD DALYELL.

K. Ja. Good, kind Huntley
Is overjoyed : a fit solemnity
Shall perfect these delights.—Crawford, attend
Our order for the preparation.

[*Exeunt all but* FRION, HERON, SKELTON,
JOHN-A-WATER, and ASTLEY.

Fri. Now, worthy gentlemen, have I not followed
My undertakings with success ? Here's entrance
Into a certainty above a hope.

Her. Hopes are but hopes ; I was ever confident,
when I traded but in remnants, that my stars had re-
served me to the title of a viscount at least : honour is
honour, though cut out of any stuffs. 112

Skel. My brother Heron hath right wisely delivered
his opinion ; for he that threads his needle with the
sharp eyes of industry shall in time go through-stitch
with the new suit of preferment.

Ast. Spoken to the purpose, my fine-witted brother
Skelton ; for as no indenture but has its counterpane, no

noverint but his condition or defeasance¹; so no right but may have claim, no claim but may have possession, any Act of Parliament to the contrary notwithstanding. 121

Fri. You are all read in mysteries of state,
And quick of apprehension, deep in judgement,
Active in resolution ; and 'tis pity
Such counsel should lie buried in obscurity.
But why, in such a time and cause of triumph,
Stands the judicious Mayor of Cork so silent ?
Believe it, sir, as English Richard prospers,
You must not miss employment of high nature. 129

J. à-Wat. If men may be credited in their mortality,
which I dare not peremptorily aver but they may or not
be, presumptions by this marriage are then, in sooth,
of fruitful expectation. Or else I must not justify other
men's belief, more than other should rely on mine.

Fri. Pith of experience ! those that have borne office
Weigh every word before it can drop from them.
But, noble counsellors, since now the present
Requires in point of honour,—pray, mistake not,—
Some service to our lord, 'tis fit the Scots
Should not engross all glory to themselves 140
At this so grand and eminent solemnity.

Skel. The Scots ! the motion is defied : I had rather,
for my part, without trial of my country, suffer perse-
cution under the pressing-iron of reproach ; or let my
skin be punched full of eyelet-holes with the bodkin of
derision.

Ast. I will sooner lose both my ears on the pillory of
forgery.

¹ Indenture is a form of legal agreement, counterpane a copy (or counterpart) held by the other party. *Noverint* is the first word of the opening formula of an Act, and is here put for the Act itself : defeasance is a condition the fulfilment of which would render the Act void.

Her. Let me first live a bankrupt, and die of hunger,
without compounding for sixpence in the pound. 150

J. à-Wat. If men fail not in their expectations, there
may be spirits also that digest no rude affronts, Master
Secretary Frion, or I am cozened; which is possible,
I grant.

Fri. Resolved like men of knowledge: at this feast,
then,

In honour of the bride, the Scots, I know,
Will in some show, some masque, or some device,
Prefer their duties: now it were uncomely
That we be found less forward for our prince
Than they are for their lady; and by how much 160
We outshine them in persons of account,
By so much more will our endeavours meet with
A livelier applause. Great emperors
Have for their recreations undertook
Such kind of pastimes: as for the conceit,
Refer it to my study; the performance
You all shall share a thanks in: 'twill be grateful.

Her. The motion is allowed: I have stole to a dancing
school when I was a prentice.

Ast. There have been Irish hubbubs, when I have
made one too. 171

Skel. For fashioning of shapes and cutting a cross-
caper, turn me off to my trade again.

J. à-Wat. Surely there is, if I be not deceived, a kind
of gravity in merriment; as there is, or perhaps ought to
be, respect of persons in the quality of carriage, which is
as is construed, either so and so.

Fri. Still you come home to me; upon occasion
I find you relish courtship with discretion;
And such are fit for statesmen of your merits. 180
Pray ye wait the prince, and in his ear acquaint him

With this design ; I'll follow and direct ye.

[*Exeunt all but FRION.*]

Oh, the toil

Of humouring this abject scum of mankind,
Muddy-brained peasants ! princes feel a misery

Beyond impartial sufferance, whose extremes

Must yield to such abettors !—yet our tide

Runs smoothly, without adverse winds : run on !

Flow to a full sea ! time alone debates

Quarrels forewritten in the book of fates. [*Exit.* 190]

ACT III. SCENE I.—*Westminster. The Palace.*

*Enter KING HENRY, with his gorget on, his sword, plume
of feathers, and truncheon, followed by URSWICK.*

K. Hen. How runs the time of day ?

Urs.

Past ten, my lord.

K. Hen. A bloody hour will it prove to some,

Whose disobedience, like the sons o' the earth,

Throws a defiance 'gainst the face of heaven.

Oxford, with Essex and stout De la Pole,

Have quieted the Londoners, I hope,

And set them safe from fear.

Urs.

They are all silent.

K. Hen. From their own battlements they may behold

Saint George's-fields o'erspread with armed men ;

Amongst whom our own royal standard threatens 10

Confusion to opposers : we must learn

To practise war again in time of peace,

Or lay our crown before our subjects' feet ;

Ha, Urswick, must we not ?

Urs.

The powers who seated

King Henry on his lawful throne will ever

Rise up in his defence.

K. Hen. Rage shall not fright
 The bosom of our confidence : in Kent
 Our Cornish rebels, cozened of their hopes,
 Met brave resistance by that country's earl,
 George Abergeny, Cobham, Poynings, Guilford, 20
 And other loyal hearts ; now, if Blackheath
 Must be reserved the fatal tomb to swallow
 Such stiff-necked abjects as with weary marches
 Have travelled from their homes, their wives, and
 children,
 To pay, instead of subsidies, their lives,
 We may continue sovereign. Yet, Urswick,
 We'll not abate one penny what in Parliament
 Hath freely been contributed ; we must not ;
 Money gives soul to action. Our competitor,
 The Flemish counterfeit, with James of Scotland, 30
 Will prove what courage need and want can nourish,
 Without the food of fit supplies :—but, Urswick,
 I have a charm in secret that shall loose
 The witchcraft wherewith young King James is bound,
 And free it at my pleasure without bloodshed.

Urs. Your majesty's a wise king, sent from heaven,
 Protector of the just.

K. Hen. Let dinner cheerfully
 Be served in ; this day of the week is ours,
 Our day of providence ; for Saturday
 Yet never failed in all my undertakings 40
 To yield me rest at night. [*A flourish.*—What means
 this warning ?
 Good fate, speak peace to Henry !

Enter LORD DAWBENEY, EARL OF OXFORD, and Attendants.

Daw. Live the king,
 Triumphant in the ruin of his enemies !

Oxf. The head of strong rebellion is cut off,
The body hewed in pieces.

K. Hen. Dawbeney, Oxford,
Minions to noblest fortunes, how yet stands
The comfort of your wishes?

Daw. Briefly thus :
The Cornish under Audley, disappointed
Of flattered expectation, from the Kentish—
Your majesty's right-trusty liegemen—flew, 50
Feathered by rage and heartened by presumption,
To take the field even at your palace-gates,
And face you in your chamber-royal : arrogance
Improved their ignorance ; for they, supposing,
Misled by rumour, that the day of battle
Should fall on Monday, rather braved your forces
Than doubted any onset ; yet this morning,
When in the dawning I, by your direction,
Strove to get Deptford-strand bridge, there I found
Such a resistance as might show what strength 60
Could make : here arrows hailed in showers upon us
A full yard long at least ; but we prevailed.
My lord of Oxford, with his fellow peers
Environing the hill, fell fiercely on them
On the one side, I on the other, till, great sir,—
Pardon the oversight,—eager of doing
Some memorable act, I was engaged
Almost a prisoner, but was freed as soon
As sensible of danger : now the fight
Began in heat, which quenched in the blood of 70
Two thousand rebels, and as many more
Reserved to try your mercy, have returned
A victory with safety.

K. Hen. Have we lost
An equal number with them ?

Oxf. In the total
 Scarce four hundred. Audley, Flammock, Joseph,
 The ringleaders of this commotion,
 Railed in ropes, fit ornaments for traitors,
 Wait your determinations.

K. Hen. We must pay
 Our thanks where they are only due : Oh, lords,
 Here is no victory, nor shall our people 80
 Conceive that we can triumph in their falls.
 Alas, poor souls ! let such as are escaped
 Steal to the country back without pursuit :
 There's not a drop of blood spilt but hath drawn
 As much of mine ; their swords could have wrought
 wonders

On their king's part, who faintly were unsheathed
 Against their prince, but wounded their own breasts.
 Lords, we are debtors to your care ; our payment
 Shall be both sure and fitting your deserts. 89

Daw. Sir, will you please to see those rebels, heads
 Of this wild monster-multitude ?

K. Hen. Dear friend,
 My faithful Dawbeney, no ; on them our justice
 Must frown in terror ; I will not vouchsafe
 An eye of pity to them. Let false Audley
 Be drawn upon an hurdle from the Newgate
 To Tower-hill in his own coat of arms
 Painted on paper, with the arms reversed,
 Defaced and torn ; there let him lose his head.
 The lawyer and the blacksmith shall be hanged,
 Quartered ; their quarters into Cornwall sent 100
 Examples to the rest, whom we are pleased
 To pardon and dismiss from further quest.—
 My Lord of Oxford, see it done.

Oxf. I shall, sir.

K. Hen. Urswick!

Urs. My lord?

K. Hen. To Dinham, our high-treasurer,
Say, we command commissions be new granted
For the collection of our subsidies
Through all the west, and that speedily.—
Lords, we acknowledge our engagements due
For your most constant services.

Daw. Your soldiers
Have manfully and faithfully acquitted 110
Their several duties.

K. Hen. For it we will throw
A largess free amongst them, which shall hearten
And cherish-up their loyalties. More yet
Remains of like employment; not a man
Can be dismissed, till enemies abroad,
More dangerous than these at home, have felt
The puissance of our arms. Oh, happy kings
Whose thrones are raised in their subjects' hearts!

[*Exeunt.*]

James and Warbeck invade England and attack the Castle of Norham.

ACT III. SCENE IV.—*Before the Castle of Norham.*

Enter KING JAMES, PERKIN WARBECK, EARL OF CRAWFORD, LORD DALYELL, HERON, ASTLEY, JOHN-A-WATER, SKELTON, and Soldiers.

K. Ja. We trifle time against these castle-walls;
The English prelate will not yield: once more
Give him a summons. [A parley is sounded.]

Enter on the walls the BISHOP OF DURHAM, armed,
a truncheon in his hand, with Soldiers.

War. See, the jolly clerk
Appears, trimmed like a ruffian!

K. Ja.

Bishop, yet

Set ope the ports, and to your lawful sovereign,
 Richard of York, surrender up this castle,
 And he will take thee to his grace ; else Tweed
 Shall overflow his banks with English blood,
 And wash the sand that cements those hard stones
 From their foundation.

Dur.

Warlike King of Scotland, 10

Vouchsafe a few words from a man enforced
 To lay his book aside, and clap on arms
 Unsuitable to my age or my profession.
 Courageous prince, consider on what grounds
 You rend the face of peace, and break a league
 With a confederate king that courts your amity,
 For whom too ? for a vagabond, a straggler,
 Not noted in the world by birth or name,
 An obscure peasant, by the rage of hell
 Loosed from his chains to set great kings at strife. 20
 What nobleman, what common man of note,
 What ordinary subject hath come in,
 Since first you footed on our territories,
 To only feign a welcome ? Children laugh at
 Your proclamations, and the wiser pity
 So great a potentate's abuse by one
 Who juggles merely with the fawns and youth
 Of an instructed compliment : such spoils,
 Such slaughters as the rapine of your soldiers
 Already have committed, is enough 30
 To show your zeal in a conceited justice.
 Yet, great king, wake not yet my master's vengeance,
 But shake that viper off which gnaws your entrails.
 I and my fellow-subjects are resolved,
 If you persist, to stand your utmost fury,
 Till our last blood drop from us.

HADOW II

D d

War.

Oh, sir, lend

No ear to this traducer of my honour!—

What shall I call thee, thou grey-bearded scandal,

That kick'st against the sovereignty to which

Thou ow'st allegiance?—Treason is bold-faced

40

And eloquent in mischief: sacred king,

Be deaf to his known malice.

Dur.

Rather yield

Unto those holy motions which inspire

The sacred heart of an anointed body.

It is the surest policy in princes

To govern well their own than seek encroachment

Upon another's right.

Craw.

The king is serious,

Deep in his meditations.

Dal.

Lift them up

To Heaven, his better genius!

War.

Can you study

While such a devil raves? Oh, sir!

K. Ja.

Well, bishop,

50

You'll not be drawn to mercy?

Dur.

Construe me

In like case by a subject of your own:

My resolution's fixed: King James, be counselled,

A greater fate waits on thee.

[*Exeunt* BISHOP OF DURHAM and Soldiers
from the walls.]

K. Ja.

Forage through

The country; spare no prey of life or goods.

War. Oh, sir, then give me leave to yield to nature.

I am most miserable: had I been

Born what this clergyman would by defame

Baffle belief with, I had never sought

The truth of mine inheritance with rapes

60

Of women or of infants murdered, virgins
 Deflowered, old men butchered, dwellings fired,
 My land depopulated, and my people
 Afflicted with a kingdom's devastation :
 Show more remorse, great king, or I shall never
 Endure to see such havoc with dry eyes ;
 Spare, spare, my dear, dear England !

K. Ja.

You fool your piety

Ridiculously careful of an interest
 Another man possesseth. Where's your faction ?
 Shrewdly the bishop guessed of your adherents, 70
 When not a petty burgess of some town,
 No, not a villager hath yet appeared
 In your assistance : that should make ye whine,
 And not your country's sufferance, as you term it.

Dal. The king is angry.

Craw.

And the passionate duke

Effeminately dolent.

War.

The experience

In former trials, sir, both of mine own
 Or other princes cast out of their thrones,
 Have so acquainted me how misery
 Is destitute of friends or of relief, 80
 That I can easily submit to taste
 Lowest reproof without contempt or words.

K. Ja. An humble-minded man !

Enter FRION.

Now, what intelligence

Speaks Master Secretary Frion ?

Fri.

Henry

Of England hath in open field o'erthrown
 The armies who opposed him in the right
 Of this young prince.

K. Ja. His subsidies, you mean :—
More, if you have it ?

Fri. Howard, Earl of Surrey,
Backed by twelve earls and barons of the north,
An hundred knights and gentlemen of name, 90
And twenty thousand soldiers, is at hand
To raise your siege. Brooke, with a goodly navy,
Is admiral at sea ; and Dawbeney follows
With an unbroken army for a second.

War. 'Tis false ! they come to side with us.

K. Ja. Retreat.
We shall not find them stones and walls to cope with.—
Yet, Duke of York, for such thou sayst thou art,
I'll try thy fortune to the height : to Surrey,
By Marchmont, I will send a brave defiance
For single combat ; once a king will venture 100
His person to an earl, with condition
Of spilling lesser blood : Surrey is bold,
And James resolved.

War. Oh, rather, gracious sir,
Create me to this glory, since my cause
Doth interest this fair quarrel ; valued least,
I am his equal.

K. Ja. I will be the man.—
March softly off : where victory can reap
A harvest crowned with triumph, toil is cheap.

[*Exeunt.*]

James is induced, for reasons of state, to make peace with Henry, and asks Warbeck to find a refuge elsewhere. Warbeck escapes with his wife to Cornwall, where he collects an army, marches to Taunton, and then flies, without giving battle, at the approach of the royal troops. He is apprehended and is carried to London, whither also Lady Katherine is taken under safe conduct.

ACT V. SCENE III.—*London: The Tower-hill.*

Enter CONSTABLE and Officers, PERKIN WARBECK, URSWICK, and LAMBERT SIMNEL as a Falconer, followed by the rabble.

Const. Make room there ! keep off, I require ye ; and none come within twelve foot of his majesty's new stocks, upon pain of displeasure.—Bring forward the malefactors.—Friend, you must to this gear, no remedy.—Open the hole, and in with his legs, just in the middle hole ; there, that hole. [*WARBECK is put in the stocks.*].—Keep off, or I'll commit you all : shall not a man in authority be obeyed !—So, so, there ; 'tis as it should be : put on the padlock, and give me the key.—Off, I say, keep off !

Urs. Yet, Warbeck, clear thy conscience : thou hast tasted 10

King Henry's mercy liberally ; the law
Has forfeited thy life ; an equal jury
Have doomed thee to the gallows ; twice most wickedly,
Most desperately, hast thou escaped the Tower,
Inveigling to thy party with thy witchcraft
Young Edward Earl of Warwick, son to Clarence,
Whose head must pay the price of that attempt ;
Poor gentleman, unhappy in his fate,
And ruined by thy cunning ! so a mongrel
May pluck the true stag down. Yet, yet, confess 20
Thy parentage ; for yet the king has mercy.

Simn. You would be Dick the Fourth ; very likely !
Your pedigree is published ; you are known
For Osbeck's son of Tournay, a loose runagate,
A landloper ; your father was a Jew,
Turned Christian merely to repair his miseries :
Where's now your kingship ?

War. Baited to my death ?
 Intolerable cruelty ! I laugh at
 The Duke of Richmond's practice on my fortunes :
 Possession of a crown ne'er wanted heralds. 30

Simn. You will not know who I am ?

Urs. Lambert Simnel,
 Your predecessor in a dangerous uproar ;
 But, on submission, not alone received
 To grace, but by the king vouchsafed his service.

Simn. I would be Earl of Warwick, toiled and ruffled
 Against my master, leaped to catch the moon,
 Vaunted my name Plantagenet, as you do ;
 An earl, forsooth ! whenas in truth I was,
 As you are, a mere rascal : yet his majesty,
 A prince composed of sweetness,—Heaven protect him !—
 Forgave me all my villainies, reprieved 41
 The sentence of a shameful end, admitted
 My surety of obedience to his service,
 And I am now his falconer ; live plenteously,
 Eat from the king's purse, and enjoy the sweetness
 Of liberty and favour ; sleep securely :
 And is not this, now, better than to buffet
 The hangman's clutches, or to brave the cordage
 Of a tough halter which will break your neck ?
 So, then, the gallant totters !—prithee, Perkin, 50
 Let my example lead thee ; be no longer
 A counterfeit ; confess, and hope for pardon.

War. For pardon ! hold, my heart-strings, whiles
 contempt
 Of injuries, in scorn, may bid defiance
 To this base man's foul language !—Thou poor vermin,
 How dar'st thou creep so near me ? thou an earl !
 Why, thou enjoy'st as much of happiness
 As all the swing of slight ambition flew at.

A dunghill was thy cradle. So a puddle,
 By virtue of the sunbeams, breathes a vapour 60
 T' infect the purer air, which drops again
 Into the muddy womb that first exhaled it.
 Bread and a slavish ease, with some assurance
 From the base beadle's whip, crowned all thy hopes :
 But, sirrah, ran there in thy veins one drop
 Of such a royal blood as flows in mine,
 Thou wouldst not change condition, to be second
 In England's state, without the crown itself.
 Coarse creatures are incapable of excellence :
 But let the world, as all to whom I am 70
 This day a spectacle, time to deliver,
 And by tradition fix posterity
 Without another chronicle than truth,
 How constantly my resolution suffered
 A martyrdom of majesty.

Simn.

He's past

Recovery ; a Bedlam cannot cure him.

Urs. Away, inform the king of his behaviour.

Simn. Perkin, beware the rope ! the hangman's coming.

[*Exit.*

Urs. If yet thou hast no pity of thy body,
 Pity thy soul !

Enter LADY KATHERINE, JANE, LORD DALYELL, and
 EARL OF OXFORD.

Jane. Dear lady !

Oxf.

Whither will ye,

80

Without respect of shame ?

Kath.

Forbear me, sir,

And trouble not the current of my duty.—

Oh, my loved lord ! can any scorn be yours

In which I have no interest.—Some kind hand

Lend me assistance, that I may partake
 The infliction of this penance.—My life's dearest,
 Forgive me ; I have stayed too long from tendering
 Attendance on reproach ; yet bid me welcome.

War. Great miracle of constancy ! my miseries
 Were never bankrupt of their confidence 90
 In worst afflictions, till this ; now I feel them.
 Report and thy deserts, thou best of creatures,
 Might to eternity have stood a pattern
 For every virtuous wife without this conquest.
 Thou hast outdone belief ; yet may their ruin
 In after-marriages be never pitied,
 To whom thy story shall appear a fable !
 Why wouldst thou prove so much unkind to greatness
 To glorify thy vows by such a servitude ?
 I cannot weep ; but trust me, dear, my heart 100
 Is liberal of passion.—Harry Richmond,
 A woman's faith hath robbed thy fame of triumph.

Oxf. Sirrah, leave off your juggling, and tie up
 The devil that ranges in your tongue.

Urs. Thus witches,
 Possessed, even to their deaths deluded, say
 They have been wolves and dogs, and sailed in egg-shells
 Over the sea, and rid on fiery dragons,
 Passed in the air more than a thousand miles,
 All in a night :—the enemy of mankind
 Is powerful, but false, and falsehood confident. 110

Oxf. Remember, lady, who you are ; come from
 That impudent impostor.

Kath. You abuse us :
 For when the holy churchman joined our hands,
 Our vows were real then ; the ceremony
 Was not in apparition, but in act.—
 Be what these people term thee, I am certain

Thou art my husband, no divorce in Heaven
 Has been sued-out between us ; 'tis injustice
 For any earthly power to divide us :
 Or we will live or let us die together.
 There is a cruel mercy.

120

War. *Spite of tyranny*
 We reign in our affections, blessed woman !
 Read in my destiny the wreck of honour ;
 Point out, in my contempt of death, to memory
 Some miserable happiness ; since herein,
 Even when I fell, I stood enthroned a monarch
 Of one chaste wife's troth pure and uncorrupted.
 Fair angel of perfection, immortality
 Shall raise thy name up to an adoration,
 Court every rich opinion of true merit,
 And saint it in the calendar of Virtue,
 When I am turned into the self-same dust
 Of which I was first formed.

130

Oxf. *The lord ambassador,*
 Huntley, your father, madam, should he look on
 Your strange subjection in a gaze so public,
 Would blush on your behalf, and wish his country
 Unleft for entertainment to such sorrow.

Kath. Why art thou angry, Oxford ? I must be
 More peremptory in my duty.—Sir,
 Impute it not unto immodesty
 That I presume to press you to a legacy
 Before we part for ever.

140

War. *Let it be, then,*
 My heart, the rich remains of all my fortunes.

Kath. Confirm it with a kiss, pray.

War. *Oh, with that*
 I wish to breathe my last ! upon thy lips,
 Those equal twins of comeliness, I seal

The testament of honourable vows: [Kisses her.

Whoever be that man that shall unkiss

This sacred print next, may he prove more thrifty

In this world's just applause, not more desertful! 150

Kath. By this sweet pledge of both our souls, I swear
To die a faithful widow to thy bed ;
Not to be forced or won : Oh, never, never !

Enter EARLS OF SURREY, HUNTLEY, and CRAWFORD, and
LORD DAWBENEY.

Daw. Free the condemned person ; quickly free him !
What has he yet confessed ?

[PERKIN WARBECK is taken out of the stocks.

Urs. Nothing to purpose ;
But still he will be king.

Sur. Prepare your journey
To a new kingdom, then, unhappy madman,
Wilfully foolish !—See, my lord ambassador,
Your lady daughter will not leave the counterfeit
In this disgrace of fate.

Hunt. I never pointed 160
Thy marriage, girl ; but yet, being married,
Enjoy thy duty to a husband freely.
The griefs are mine. I glory in thy constancy ;
And must not say I wished that I had missed
Some partage in these trials of a patience.

Kath. You will forgive me, noble sir ?

Hunt. Yes, yes ;
In every duty of a wife and daughter
I dare not disavow thee. To your husband,—
For such you are, sir,—I impart a farewell
Of manly pity ; what your life has passed through, 170
The dangers of your end will make apparent ;
And I can add, for comfort to your sufferance,

No cordial, but the wonder of your frailty,
Which keeps so firm a station. We are parted.

War. We are. A crown of peace renew thy age,
Most honourable Huntley!—Worthy Crawford!
We may embrace; I never thought thee injury.

Craw. Nor was I ever guilty of neglect
Which might procure such thought. I take my leave, sir.

War. To you, Lord Dalzell,—what? accept a sigh,
'Tis hearty and in earnest.

Dal. I want utterance; 181
My silence is my farewell.

Kath. Oh, Oh!

Jane. Sweet madam,
What do you mean?—My lord, your hand. [*To DALYELL.*

Dal. Dear lady,
Be pleased that I may wait ye to your lodging.

[*Exeunt LORD DALYELL and JANE, supporting
LADY KATHERINE.*

*Enter Sheriff and Officers with SKELTON, ASTLEY, HERON,
and JOHN-A-WATER, with halters about their necks.*

Oxf. Look ye; behold your followers, appointed
To wait on ye in death!

War. Why, peers of England,
We'll lead 'em on courageously: I read
A triumph over tyranny upon
Their several foreheads.—Faint not in the moment
Of victory! our ends, and Warwick's head, 190
Innocent Warwick's head,—for we are prologue
But to his tragedy,—conclude the wonder
Of Henry's fears; and then the glorious race
Of fourteen kings, Plantagenets, determines
In this last issue male; Heaven be obeyed!
Impoverish time of its amazement, friends,

And we will prove as trusty in our payments
 As prodigal to nature in our debts.
 Death ? pish ! 'tis but a sound ; a name of air ;
 A minute's storm, or not so much : to tumble 200
 From bed to bed, be massacred alive
 By some physicians, for a month or two,
 In hope of freedom from a fever's torments,
 Might stagger manhood ; here the pain is past
 Ere sensibly 'tis felt. Be men of spirit !
 Spurn coward passion ! so illustrious mention
 Shall blaze our names, and style us kings o'er Death.

Daw. Away, impostor beyond precedent !

[Exit Sheriff and Officers with the Prisoners.]

No chronicle records his fellow.

Hunt.

I have

Not thoughts left : 'tis sufficient in such cases 210
 Just laws ought to proceed.

*Enter KING HENRY, the BISHOP OF DURHAM, and
 HIALAS.*

K. Hen.

We are resolved.

Your business, noble lords, shall find success
 Such as your king impórtunes.

Hunt.

You are gracious.

K. Hen. Perkin, we are informed, is armed to die ;
 In that we'll honour him. Our lords shall follow
 To see the execution ; and from hence
 We gather this fit use,—that public states,
 As our particular bodies, taste most good
 In health when purged of corrupted blood. *[Exit.]*

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